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WAKE UP, WOMEN OF ASSAM!

(Speeches of Lady Reid)



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LADY REID

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LADY REID'S SPEECHES

Preface

THIS volume of Speeches of Lady Reid, appearing in print, after her departure from the Government House, Shillong, is appropriately named "Wake up, Women of Assam!" as these speeches are really intended to inspire the Women of Assam and awaken them to their duties and responsibilities in connection with the all-round improvement of the mothers of the nation.

Lady Reid's Speeches, which are interesting and instructive in themselves, will be appreciated by all who take keen interest in Women's educational advancements, hygienic and sanitary improvements, medical care of school children and Maternity and Child Welfare activities. Of the inspiring ideals contained in the Speeches, she was herself a living embodiment. She was practically the life and soul of all Women's Welfare Works in Assam—Educational, Medical, Industrial and Political. She was the fountain-head of inspiration behind the Anti-Tuberculosis Association, Indian Red Cross Society (Assam Branch), Girls Guides Association, Assam Industries' Association, Assam Women's Educational League, War-Work Parties, Women's Voluntary Service and such other humanitarian organisations, as will be evident to the readers of this volume.

As one intimately connected with the Department of Education, I can testify to the ever wakeful endeavours of Lady Reid to lead the Women of Assam from darkness unto light, from death unto life, from poverty to wealth, from bondage to emancipation. I quote below from a message I gave to the Secretary, Assam Women's Education League, as a Foreword to the Report of the Annual Conference of the League:—

"Assam Women's Educational League is very fortunate in having for its Founder-President a Lady who has given a strong and healthy lead to all philanthropic and educational movements in Bengal and Assam, specially those that promote the welfare and

progress of women. Lady Reid has earned the gratitude of all of us by a associating herself with every institution and organisation that seeks to advance the education of women and aims at building up healthy, happy and practical homes and developing a better motherhood in India. The Women's Education League founded by her in Assam has the prospect of turning every home into a picture of heaven, of love and goodwill and service and useful activities in this Province. The keen interest evinced by her in the reform of education, and specially of education in the earlier stages which can be effected by establishing contact and sympathy and understanding between parents and teachers, between teachers and pupils and between parents and children, has led her to get two excellent books of Charlottee Mason translated into Bengali, *viz.* "Home Education" and "Parents and Children". I have no doubt the Women's Educational League will try to popularise such publications as they serve to counteract the materialistic outlook on life and education of the modern age."

The first of the speeches in this volume shows her sympathy with the Deaf and the Dumb and the Blind and such other afflicted children of the province. Thanks to her kind initiative, Assam has been able to secure as many as twenty free seats in the Calcutta Blind School for our poor blind children.

May this volume of Speeches serve as a golden link between Lady Reid and her sisters in Assam, for whom she sacrificed so much of her comforts and leisure hours and devoted so much of her delicate care and thought and service.

I am deeply grateful to Lady Reid for her generous permission to have this volume printed and to have the sale proceeds utilised for the Sylhet Deaf and Dumb School. My grateful thanks are also due to the Government of Assam for their kind approval of the same.

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I. TOWARDS BETTER EDUCATION -(FROM DARKNESS UNTO LIGHT)

1. The Sylhet Deaf and Dumb School (17th November, 1941).

I am very glad to have this opportunity of seeing the Deaf and Dumb School in Sylhet.

It was early in 1937 when we were still in Bengal that I visited the Calcutta Deaf and Dumb School and was tremendously impressed by the wonderful results achieved by their methods and by the marvellous patience and perseverance of the teachers which made it possible to achieve such results. One of the students there then was a lad from Assam, and he came up to me and standing in front of the class he made a most moving appeal for help for the many others in Assam afflicted as he was and who had not had the advantages he had had. I promised him that when I went to Assam I would do what I could for his fellow-countrymen. This promise I was not able to keep for when I pleaded for some steps to be taken I was told that where there was not enough Government money to educate normal children how should such money be spent on the abnormal. However, as it happens in so many instances, when the education authorities see private enterprise and initiative making a bold and successful venture they are ready enough to come to the help of those who have had the courage to start such enterprises. So it has been in this case and I am glad indeed that the courage and initiative displayed by those who started this School is now recognised and appreciated not only by the Ministry but by all the Members of the Legislature.

In 1938 and 1939 we were back in Bengal and so it happens that this is my first visit to you.

Lady Twynam left a note for me after her visit to you in 1939. She was much impressed by the excellent start made here and by the kindness of Mr. Roberts in lending the building for the School. I am

very glad to note that the Assam Oil Company award two stipends for pupils who are the children of their employees. I would make a fervent appeal to the very many employers of labour throughout the Province to see whether they too could not afford the very moderate charges here for one or possibly two stipends. There must be few amongst us who have not some experience of the tragedy of deafness amongst our own loved ones. When deafness comes with the passage of time it is sad indeed, but what of those who have never heard, who have been born deaf and therefore dumb? That is indeed a cruel bondage. This was the description of Helen Keller, who lost her sight and hearing at the age of 7, given by one who knew her well. "A little savage, perverse, destructive, a rebel locked within prison walls". Helen Keller has become a legendary figure, and has been ranked by Mark Twain as a character equal in interest to Napoleon. She has travelled the world over and addressed large gatherings in all the principal cities of the world. Her description of places and people are arresting and conspicuous for their insight and penetration. The world would have been a very much poorer place but for the love and devotion of that wonderful woman, Anne Sullivan Macy, who set herself the task of liberating this great soul from its prison bars. We may well ask, is the world still not missing much through lost opportunities? Everyone has something to give to the world and to posterity. It may be much, or it may be little, according to our own efforts, but to leave the deaf and dumb locked within prison walls with no opportunity to develop the soul within them is not only cruelty to the individual but a terrible waste to the Nation.

We who have so much to enjoy in life, the lovely sight of Nature, the loved tones of the voices of those dear to us, the delights of music, the wealth of knowledge available to us through our senses of sight and hearing, how can we bear to leave any in such misery

deprived of all those wonderful things ? There are many who have the will to be p wit'out the necessary knowledge. A very cienific training is needed to help those handicapped by deafness or blindness but I think there would be no lack of such teachers if the call for them was sent out and if the means were available to have them not only trained but employed after training. The Indian temperament seems to me to be peculiarly suited to this work ; the infinite patience which is required, and the gentleness which is inherent in the Indian communities of Bengal and Assam, for I speak only of those I know, are all such qualities as are needed in this work. There must be many living behind prison bars in Assam, kept perhaps from sight and sound of others for fear of shame. But the shame is not for those who have children afflicted in these ways but for such as do not bestir themselves to get the specialised teaching these children need. The hardest thing of all, I find, in Assam is to get anything across to the people for whom it is intended. Surely one labours often in vain ! One cannot expect to reach the illiterate parents of deaf and dumb children but employers of Labour, Schoolmasters, the Religious Leaders of the people, surely these could apply on behalf of such children for the helping hand which cannot otherwise be extended to them.

In conclusion I would congratulate very heartily Mr. Chakrabarty to whom we owe the start of this School and Mr. Bhattacherjee and Mr. Baidyanath Mookerjee for the great support they have given. They must be glad indeed at the very excellent progress made already. I hope that future progress may be much more commensurate with the needs of the afflicted children of the Province, I hope that the time may come when every deaf and dumb child in the Province may find the opportunity to escape from the prison bars of his or her affliction and become of real service to humanity and a source of happiness in themselves.

2. (a) Inauguration of Assam Women's Education League May 22, 1940.

We have come here today in order to launch a new Samity or Women's League for the purpose of furthering the cause of education amongst the women and girls of the Province.

I would like to express our thanks to the Director of Public Instruction who in sending us his good wishes states that he would welcome such a League.

I think the questions we need to ask ourselves are, firstly, is such a league necessary or advisable and secondly, if it is so, how are we going to work it to the maximum benefit of the cause for which it stands ?

To the question--'is Government doing all it can for the education of the girls of the Province' we have only to look at the comparative figures for boys' education and that of girls. I will just take two items out of the Budget figures for 1940-41. For that year the provision on account of Government Secondary Schools for Boys is Rs.8,40,975 and that for similar schools for girls Rs.94,418 or about one-ninth. For grants to non-Government Secondary Schools the provision is Boys—Rs.2,87,442 and for Girls Rs.76,906, or about one-fourth.

A forecast on May 8th of a literacy campaign in a certain town of Assam stated that the Municipal Board had decided to introduce compulsory free primary education "to affect boys only". I have seen many girls' schools in Assam and the sad conclusion to which I have been driven is that, apart from missionary schools, anything is reckoned to be good enough for the girls. I have seen girls herded together in tumble-down buildings, in some cases fainting from the heat and stuffiness of the congested room. These are the girls who will very soon be the mothers of the new generation and it is in these very years of adole-

scence that their health should be conserved and physical stamina be built up and not impaired in this way. I think I do not need to stress the point that unless the mothers are educated, the children are deprived in the first all-important years of their childhood of what they most need, the enlightened atmosphere of an educated home. Never can the wasted time of those early years be made up. Bad habits will have been formed which may persist through life, habits of idleness, disobedience and self-indulgence—all these might have been prevented by right training and it is the young mothers who have the honour and privilege of bringing up the new generation in their infancy and early childhood. The conviction that the education of the succeeding generation is the chief business of every age is one we should do well to cherish. The girls must be educated if they are going to become mothers of worthy sons and daughters. No amount of training in Health and Hygiene and better standards of living is of any avail unless these principles are part of the daily life of the home, the atmosphere of which depends entirely upon the women within its walls. Educate the women and they will raise the standard of life, and it will be their pride to bring up such children as will become good citizens and a credit to any nation.

So I think our first step is clear. We must demand a greater impetus in the education of the girls of the Province and we must demand that it should be a well-balanced education. We want our girls to be Home-makers in every sense of the word.

But here I would offer a word of warning. There is a great tendency at the present time to stress the advantages of utilitarian education. Many seem to think that book learning is a waste of time and argue that the time spent on books would be of far more value if it was spent on training youth for specialised jobs. One great nation has made this mistake and because of it the whole world is steeped

in sorrow and suffering. A great educationist, Miss Charles M. Mayne, in 1923, "Germany has pursued a different ideal to that of Denmark and Scandinavia. Her citizens, too, have been great, unified by the idea of utility and, if we will only remember the lesson, the war has shown us how futile is an education which affords no moral or intellectual uplift, no motive higher than the learner's peculiar advantage and that of the State. Germany became morally bankrupt for a season only, let us hope not solely because of the war but as the result of an education which ignored the things of the spirit or gave these a nominal place and a poor rendering in a utilitarian syllabus". These words are, alas!, even more true to-day than in 1923 and Germany's moral bankruptcy is even more profound. I think we are fortunate that in *Sam* this question has been investigated by your education authorities and the choice has been made against a purely utilitarian education.

The man in the street is apt to blame Hitler for all that happens in Germany, but it must not be forgotten that a people must voluntarily give up their free will before any one man can obtain such a preponderating influence. Free will is the most precious possession of man and no man has a right to deprive himself of that, or he debases himself to the status of a slave. Freedom is not licence but is the deliverance from all forms of slavery, whether it be the slavery of men's passions or the slavery of ordered forms of violence. A liberal education should set both men and women free, so that they may become the slaves of no man, but learn to have a right judgment in all things.

The present system of Government in India is based on a democratic ideal. Fortunately for us we are not asked to say whether this is suited to India or not. But what it means for us is that we have the way open of bringing the wishes of the women of the Province to the notice of the Legislature. For this purpose

we need a responsible association backed by the support of a vast body of women. It should be in no sort of way a political body but its whole purpose should be to further the cause of education amongst the women and girls of the Province irrespective of whatever Party is in power.

We have a parable in our Scriptures from which we can, I think, draw a useful lesson—"There was in a city a Judge which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me".

Far be it from me to cast aspersions on the Hon'ble Minister for Education by likening him to the unjust Judge, but I think the principle of " continual wearying" is one we may well adopt.

In this connection I would again stress that party politics should never come into this Association. The danger of such a movement being captured for party purposes are clear, but I for one am convinced that the strength of the movement will lie in its complete detachment from politics; it should have one single aim, the advancement of the cause of education amongst the women and girls of Assam and we shall have to treat whoever is the Hon'ble Minister for Education, of whatever Government is in power, in the same way as the importunate widow treated the unjust Judge of the Parable.

Our method must be constitutional. We must organise ourselves into a body which is able to shew by its numbers that it represents the women of Assam and by its well ordered meetings that it is able to put up well considered Resolutions to Government so that it

may command the attention and respect of all. I believe that some may say we have already an Assam Branch of the All-India Women's conference. Why cannot that function for this purpose ? I agree that the purpose of furthering the cause of Education is one of the aims of that Conference, but I do not think there is any harm in having several organisations. Many streams unite to form a big river and it may well be that by a process of trial and error the right system may be evolved, the best be taken from each and eventually through amalgamation or affiliation there may be one recognised voice speaking on behalf of the women of Assam.

This I know is Miss Sen's opinion and I think there is such to be said for it. There is certainly a wide sphere in which each Association can work without any overlapping for some time to come. I would like to make it clear that this is pre-eminently an Association in which every school teacher in Assam should join and all who wish to further the cause of education for women and girls in the Province.

We might well take as our motto the quotation from Lord Halifax's address to youth, the words of which are inscribed on the column at New Delhi which stands in front of Viceroy's House :—

In Thought Faith

In Word Wisdom

In Deed Courage

In Life Service

So may India be great.

2. **Opening of the 1st Conference of the Assam
Women's Education League 7th
October, 1911**

— — —

I feel very honoured in that it has fallen to me to preside at this first Conference of the Assam Women's Education League. I am very sensible of the confidence you have reposed in me and in all humility I will endeavour to carry out my duties to the furtherance of our common aim.

One of the first of my duties, and a very pleasant one, is to welcome the Delegates. We want them to feel that not only are they welcome but their presence in large numbers is very necessary. We wish to get light into the minds and spirit of the people so that we may serve them and their best interests. In this League everyone has a part to play and the humblest member of it is not by any means the least important.

If this League is to justify itself it must have a thorough comprehension of the whole subject of Girls' Education in the Province, it must face the difficulties and problems and it must look forward. It should, in due course, put forward constructive criticisms and not be content merely to allot blame to a Government which after all is a popular Government and should be interpreting the wishes of the people.

I think that most of us feel that assistance for Girls' Education has been handed out in a very meagre and haphazard manner, rather like the crumbs which fall from the Masters' Table. We have to ask ourselves if that is good enough for the Girls who are going to be Mothers of the new generation? I think we shall all need to examine this subject very carefully.

It seems to me that we must look at this subject as a whole. If girls are to be worthy mothers they must have healthy bodies and healthy minds. It is as absurd to expect intellectual progress from

children suffering from malnutrition as to expect them to acquit themselves creditably in walking, running or any other physical feats.

It took roughly 30 years in England to convince school authorities and Parents of children of the importance of this aspect of school life, and it was through the medium of Medical inspection of schools that the great change in outlook was brought about.

"The inception and growth of the medical inspection of school children," wrote an old and experienced physician in 1936, "and all that has flowed from it, is the greatest social development during my life-time, as its direct and indirect influence has spread through the whole of our social life."

If the state of affairs revealed by the Medical inspection of school children proved staggering to the Authorities in Great Britain, what can we expect in India ? The value of medical inspection in schools is that, firstly, it unveils the physical condition of the nation's children, and secondly, medical inspection naturally leads to medical treatment. Thirdly, the School Medical Service in Great Britain arrested the attention of parents, awakened their interest, and stimulated their sense of responsibility for the health of their children. You will find that this aspect of school life is one that will be discussed in this Conference, so I will say no more of this just now.

As regards the education of the mind as distinct from that of the body, you will, I know, have this put before you in all its aspects. There is the point of view that it is better to concentrate meagre resources on giving a better education to the few rather than to spread such resources over the lesser good to the many. It is truly a choice of evils and I can only suggest that the answer lies in demanding that the needs of youth shall have first call on public funds.

We all deplore the evils of the opium habit and would like to see it banished from our midst. But when we look at the cost of that campaign and think of the ways in which all that money could have been used for the benefit of girls' education, are we not entitled to wonder whether on balance this nation would not have got better value if those funds had been used to improve the lives and prospects of the young, and especially of those who are to be the mothers of the future? Anyhow, our aim should be to try and convince our legislators that when funds are so limited, the cause we have before us today deserves and should get a fair share of what is available.

Let us be sure that the Education which is being offered to our girls is something which will stand them in good stead through life. It has been said that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing; if it must be little let us make sure that the little is good. Some would say that that little should be of an entirely utilitarian character. Miss Mason wrote of England "The country of our love will not stand still; if we let the people sink into the mire of a material education our doom is sealed." This is just as true of India, if indeed it is not even more so. Do we not already see this awful doom working itself out in Nazi Germany? Is the Youth in our schools being rightly guided? There are elements of magnificent heroism and self-sacrifice in youth, are these being exploited? Which of us wants youth to follow the example of Hitler Youth, to hand over all freedom of thought and become a mere tool in the hands of despots? The fate of the whole freedom-loving world hangs in the balance. Let us clear from our eyes the film that clouds our vision. Let us look outwards rather than inwards, forward rather than backward. Let the dead past bury its dead for the world remains ever young. Youth must take the helm in the new world, but lest we be hurled into chaos by the unrestrained impulsiveness of undisciplined youth, let us demand for the daughters of India a balanced Education, a system of

childr^{en} and a man in responsibility so that their children may inherit the loveliness of a well-ordered home. For in those first years of childhood should be laid the foundations of character. Good habits formed almost unconsciously, simply by the constant repetition of such habits, will mould the child into the shape and form of the good citizen of tomorrow.

Truthfulness, a sense of fair play, love of cleanliness of mind as of body will never leave the child who has learnt these at his Mother's knee. So let us remember the Future and resolve that where the daughters of India are concerned nothing but the best is good enough, and our aim will ever be to strive for that best.

—

3. Prize Distribution of the Lady Keane High School and College for Girls, Shillong (10th May, 1941).

I am very glad to be here with you today for your Prize Giving Function.

I am sure we have all much enjoyed the Concert Programme and I congratulate all the Prize Winners on their achievements. I congratulate the College Staff on having swept away the last lingering Male Professor! Having achieved that you will now have to substantiate the claim of our sex to be as good as men in certain professions.

I am very glad to hear that you have become affiliated to Calcutta University and I am sure you have done wisely in choosing the harder way of incurring extra expenditure rather than provide inefficient instruction. Since this is the first Women's College in Assam to obtain affiliation up to the B. A. Standard, it must aim at a high quality of achievement. I hope that it may be possible for Government to help you out of your present difficulties.

I would like now to divide my words between the girls of the High School and those of the College.

First of all the younger girls I would say this: Make up your minds that now while you are young you will set up the habits which will stand you in good stead all through your life. If you do not make these habits now you will find it is more difficult to form them later on. The habit of concentration is one that you will need most of all. Your work will take you far less time and be of much more value if you determine that you will no let your thoughts wander. In your games you can see how those who excel are those who concentrate on the job in hand. You can live great opportunities here and you may then widen your appreciation by making the most of your time in this beautiful school in these beautiful surroundings. The more you concentrate the more you will enjoy everything you do, whether it is work or play.

To the College girls I have much I want to say. You are going through a phase of great developments. You may think that you are unique in the problems which confront you and which you try valiantly to solve, but let me assure you that all youth goes through the period of mental adolescence. It is not only natural, but it would be a very poor outlook for your nation if it were not so. I know that all the youth of India to-day is seeing visions in a free India and it is well that they should. We too look forward to the day when India will find her Soul and become a free and united Nation. You are among those who will be responsible for the India of the future and I know that many of you are now preparing yourselves to be worthy to take your share in moulding India's destiny.

Remember always that the whole meaning of representative Government is that the Government of a Country represents, or repeats in itself, the charac-

teristic of the majority of the people. Its faults and its virtues are the faults and the virtues of the people who have put it in power. So, if or when you will have some voice, take it, and in the event of other of public life. You may be only small portions of the Voice of Public Opinion, but it is that alone which is powerful enough to guide your Great Country through the difficulties and troubles which are the inevitable pains, which accompany the birth of a great Nation.

Purify yourselves first that you may demand purity in public life. Keep your reason free from passion and then make good use of it. "Thinking is easy, acting is difficult, and to put one's thought into action is the most difficult thing in the world".

"Rebellion is not a guarantee of independence. On the contrary, it is an acute form of prejudice". Hatred in all its forms is like a corrosive acid, it eats into the minds of all who entertain such thoughts and destroys the pure brilliance of thought. According to the thoughts which you harbour so you will become, for thoughts shape character. Purity is, or should be, the essential attributes of Women. You are at the threshold of Life and who knows but that some of you may be called upon to play a great part in public life. Train yourselves now as those who run in the Race have to train themselves. Obtain the mastery over your thoughts as well as over your bodies. Those of you who become wives and mothers will have a great part to play in the right ordering of your homes and of your children's infancy. Those most important first years are in your keeping. The more knowledge you acquire the more fitted will you become to guide the tender steps of early childhood. Remember always that "it is knowledge that exalteth a nation, because out of duly ordered knowledge proceedeth righteousness and prosperity ensueth".

1. Prize Giving of the Welsh Mission High School for Girls (13th November, 1911)

I am very glad to have this opportunity to say a few words and for this reason: I have had the opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with some of the girls who have been educated at this School. I have studied them carefully and I have no hesitation in saying that you would have to go a very long way before you could find their equal in sheer sterling worth of character. Educational standards and achievements can be judged by the yard stick of examinations but the real test of education is not so much in the passing of examinations as in the foundation of character. An educational degree of a certain standard may be the key to open the door to a post which will give promise of a livelihood, but what of the way to be travelled when the threshold has been crossed? It is character alone which will bring to the forefront those who are worthy to be the leaders of their nation.

The Khasi people owe a great debt of gratitude to the teachers of this School who have shown in their own lives and in their devotion to duty over many years steadfastness and staunchness of character based upon strong and sincere religious foundations. I am happy to be able to pay my tribute of admiration to those who have laboured so devotedly for the girls of these Hills.

It is a sad and weary world when in spite of labours early and late we can see no tangible evidence that the work we have been trying to do has been worth while. That is not so here and I think that the Headmistress and Teachers in this School must feel very happy when they see their *ex-pupils* filling posts of great responsibility with modesty and success.

To the present pupils I would say—You have a great example in your predecessors but you have greater advantages than they had. They have, as it

were, carried the torch a certain span, the torch must be handed on and carried ever onwards and it is for you to bear that torch to the utmost limit of your strength. So, as they that run in a race train themselves for speed and endurance, so must you be vigilant to train yourselves now in these days of your preparation for life so that you too may reflect yet greater credit on your nation and leave the world a better place for your passing through.

I look forward with confidence to the future when the designation of "Khasi" will stand as security throughout India for loyalty to an ideal, steadfastness of character and that attention to detail which comes from an infinite capacity for taking pain which, we are assured, is the hall mark of genius. My best wishes go with you always.

5. Girls' Inter-School Sports (April 5th, 1941)

It is a great joy to me to be here with you today. I remember well the first beginnings of this Sports Meeting for Girls and I have watched your progress year by year with sympathy and admiration.

You have had difficulties to face and probably very little public sympathy. Athletic sports are an innovation for Indian girls and some fear lest joining in such games may have the effect of turning these gentle girls into emancipated women with mannish ways and behaviour ! Such women are disliked by all men and by the majority of women too. I feel there is not the slightest risk of that. Gentleness and modesty are the inherent characteristics of Indian girls and no one need fear that these attractive traits will be imperilled by games or sports. Why then should we bother with such things as sports and what can we learn from them ? I will try and tell you. Every nation has its characteristic virtues and its characteristic failings, and one is very often the complement of the other. A failing we often come across is the inability to keep up a sustain-

ed effort, without which no goal can be achieved. Without intense concentration and sustained effort no race can be won. So too with the Race of Life, only those who have learnt in their youth the value and habit of sustained effort will reach any goal for which they strive. Remember too, if you do not reach your goal it is nobody's fault but your own. We are all too apt to blame our failings on to others but we do well to remind ourselves that the seeds of success or failure lie within ourselves. This brings me to the second of the failings, which I think your encouragement of Sports will help to eradicate. If you were running a race and I was to rush down on to the track, take some girl's, and and race home with her what would you think? You may well laugh! The immediate result would probably be that we should both fall and someone else would win the race! But what I want to ask you is why, when you are content to run a race and win it, or lose it, on your own merits, you should expect to have your hand held and to be pushed, pulled or supported in the Race of Life by those possessing influence or relationship with People in Authority? This tendency is not of course confined to India by any manner of means but I think you will agree with me that it is a very menacing trait in public life in India today. You, at all events, can learn from your Sports to be content to stand or fall on your merits alone and to despise the thought of being dependent on the favour of anyone.

I must congratulate all who have worked so hard to bring about this very enjoyable Sports Meeting, on the great success of their efforts.

I congratulate all the Winners who well deserve their prizes. To the others who have not won prizes I say "do not be discouraged, you may be very glad some day to have learnt the useful if difficult lesson of being able not only to lose with a smile, but also to congratulate those who have beaten you with no thought of malice in your hearts".

**6. Opening Ceremony of the Malki Non-Sectarian School now Lady Reid Middle English School.
(March 7th, 1942)**

I feel a very proprietary interest in this Malki Non-Sectarian School for I was certainly present, and hope that I may have to some small extent assisted in the labours which brought the present Building into existence. Knowing Miss Barr's flair for choosing just what is needful for a School Building I am not surprised to find this so eminently satisfactory. You can realise then with what pleasure I have come here today to perform this opening ceremony.

I understand that I am addressing those who, by helping to build up the necessary funds, have also won the right to look upon this school as their own particular protégé.

Although we claim for ourselves a modest share yet we know that in reality this school owes its whole being, from its inception to its completion, to the dauntless courage, unswerving resolution and that faith which can remove mountains which have been shewn by Miss Barr from first to last. Hers is the burning resolve to be satisfied with nothing but the best which is the hallmark of the true educationist. By "best" I mean not the easy or luxurious way, not the path that leads through well-worn ruts to the examination table with its stereotyped results but the way of true knowledge when the child learns not for the sake of marks and a place in class but because even as his body cries out for food so does his mind cry out for knowledge. Love of knowledge is inherent in every child until, as happens in so many cases, he becomes suffocated with the dead weight of uninspired facts, the correct relating of which is considered the criterion of progress.

Anyone who has seen the methods adopted by Miss Barr, in which her teachers are trained, cannot help being struck by the rapidity with which the

children absorb their lessons, their delight and satisfaction in the mastering of difficulties and their complete disregard of mark and prize, which to so many are the be-all and end-all of school life.

I am indeed glad that here we have a definite step forward : the children who started in Miss Barr's Primary School are able to go on in the same methods through Middle School and I hope before long that they will be able to continue through High School classes as well.

I am sure that the results as they will be seen in the children brought up throughout on these methods will go far to remove the reproach so often heard that education merely turns out a vast number of unemployed who are not capable of doing work that is not merely imitative and who lack initiative and the character necessary to make a success of life.

If this prove to be the case, as I am sure it will then Miss Barr will indeed have given to the Khasi nation a way of education which will bring in a bountiful harvest in due time.

In this hope and this expectation it is with very great pleasure that I open the Malki Non-Sectarian School.

7. The Jitendra Narayan Ray Infant and Nursery School, Calcutta (March, 1939)

Let me first of all say how deeply I have been touched by the warmth of your welcome though I know that you all feel, as I too feel, that we are meeting to-day under the shadow of a great loss. The tragic death of Lord Brabourne has not only deprived the Province of a great and well-loved Governor, but it has taken from us also Lady Brabourne, whose keen and sympathetic interest in education and social welfare in this city was so universally known and admired,

and I know that I am only expressing what she herself felt when I say that her inability to meet you all was a very deep disappointment to her.

I must congratulate most warmly your Founder-Secretary on the wonderful progress made by this Nursery School in the few years since it was started. This in itself is sufficient proof that it does indeed fill a very great need. To Mrs. Ray belongs the honour of not only having had the vision to see this need, but also the courage to turn her convictions into the practical form of this first Nursery School.

I have often, both here in Bengal and in Assam, spoken of my deep conviction that only by training from infancy can we hope to achieve the greatest measure of success in the nation-building activities of the Province.

We are all agreed that prevention is better than cure, and not only better but far far easier.

Why spend money, so badly needed everywhere, in eradicating flaws of physique and faults of character which never need have existed at all ?

The child is the most precious possession not only of the family, but of the nation, and what should we say of people who waited for their most precious possessions to suffer damage before they began to think of safeguarding them ? I do feel most strongly that money spent on Nursery Schools is money saved, for later much may have to be spent in curing defects which should never have occurred.

I am very glad to hear that Government has set up a committee to formulate definite proposals for establishing a training institute for Kindergarten and Nursery School teachers, with a Nursery School attached.

None of us who have visited the Jitendra Narayan Ray Infant and Nursery School can have failed to have been impressed by the happy atmosphere prevailing, the quiet delight with which these small people learn to shoulder responsibilities, the readiness with which they help those yet smaller than themselves and the eagerness with which they teach themselves by sense of touch, by songs and games and the study of nature.

Though cramped for space Mrs. Ray has not let this defeat her and I have seen how she has transformed a bare yard into a perfect miniature playground for these children. Truly we have in Mrs. Ray one who does not allow herself to be the victim of circumstances but who decides that "where there is a will there is a way".

8. Opening of the Maharani Girls' School, Darjeeling. (1939)

It is of particular interest to me to come here today and to have the privilege of opening the Maharani Girls' School's new building since I was in the happy position of giving the first donation towards it.

It seemed to me then that Mrs. Dutt had taken on a tremendous undertaking. I hardly felt that the small donation I was able to give was of any practical assistance when one realised the sum required, but it just shows how faith and perseverance can accomplish wonders and how many small amounts can rise to a large total. I am sure we all realise that the success of this effort has meant a lot of hard work for Mrs. Dutt and she and her helpers deserve our very grateful appreciation.

The Maharani Girls' School is now 31 years old and has built up a tradition under Mrs. Sarkar which is one of the most valuable assets to a school. I am sure that everyone of the girls here to-day will resolve to carry forward in her own life the principles of the School, for none of us can live to ourselves alone, and what we are and what we become must reflect either credit or otherwise on the School to which we owe our allegiance.

The Dark Age among the women of India is passing. Some are still apprehensive of coming forward into the limelight but even amongst those who still value the seclusion of the Purdah the necessity of education is admitted. There is much for women to do in the world to-day. You girls who are on the threshold of life will have many and varied opportunities to serve your country and your people. Youth is impulsive, fearless, and very generous-hearted, and for that reason is very easily led, but I am sure that with your traditions, with the discipline and stability you have acquired in this School, you will be able to hold fast to the ideals of justice and tolerance which you need to guide you through the problems of life.

You are still building the foundations of your lives and I hope that you will build them as strongly as the foundations of your new building, for which of us know how large the structure may be which those foundations will be called upon to carry.

I would like to congratulate your Architect, Mr. Dutta, on the design of the building, while the fact that he has given it his personal supervision is a guarantee that it has been well and truly built.

This is a very happy day for the Maharani School and I can assure you that I am very proud to share your happiness.

I shall now have very great pleasure in opening this building. I wish the School and all who work in it the greatest possible measure of success in the future.

II. TOWARDS BETTER HEALTH (FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE).

9. Maternity and Child Welfare Centre, Sylhet (November 23, 1937).

In thanking you for your very kind welcome I want to tell you at once how very struck I am by the very great efforts which you have, all of you, made towards this Red Cross Welfare Centre, and to express my appreciation of the wonderful response which has been made to the appeal for funds towards this purpose. The enthusiasm with which this Red Cross work started in Sylhet is due in a very large measure to your President, Rai Bahadur P. C. Dutt and I am very sure that you all appreciate, as I do, his unremitting efforts in this most excellent cause. I have read with the greatest interest an account of how this Centre started and I congratulate you on the very generous donors who have contributed so materially with gifts of money and of building. It is very evident that in Sylhet there are many very generous and public-spirited gentlemen and this is a matter upon which you are much to be congratulated.

You have, I know, been disappointed in that owing to illness Mrs. Patton has not been able to open your new Lying—in Ward for you. I understand that Mrs. Dennchy has now kindly performed that ceremony for you. I shall, I know, be voicing the thoughts in all your hearts when I say how greatly we appreciate all the work Mrs. Patton has done in this connection and all the enthusiasm she has shewn—and in all this work she has, I know, been very ably helped by her husband. Your hardworking Secretary, Dr. Kar too has done sterling work and deserves the thanks of all.

It is not easy work starting anything new. All sorts of difficulties arise which it may not have been possible to foresee and to legislate for, and it is only by the tactful and willing co-operation of everybody concerned

that arrangements can be made to adjust the principles of Red Cross work so as to fit in with local requirements. I am very sure that this co-operation will not be found lacking.

I think that perhaps it behoves us all at times to remind ourselves of the objective of all our work. Red Cross work is for the poor and necessitous, for those who have no hope of being able to pay for medical aid or nursing help for themselves. I am sure there is no one here who imagines that membership of the Red Cross, be it Rs. 12 a year or Re.1 a year, entitles us to any of the benefits provided by the Red Cross. We pay our membership subscription so that the very poor may receive the benefits which we can pay for ourselves and for which we ought to pay. Take the case of the Health Visitor. She is the servant of the poor. Should the Health Visitor be required to attend other cases, then it is essential that a scale of fees be drawn up by your Committee for her attendance on such cases, these fees to be payable to the Red Cross Association. Also it should be clearly borne in mind that this work is outside the scope of the Health Visitor's duties and can only be performed by her if she has time available from her legitimate duties. Nor is it within the scope of the Health Visitor's duties to train the midwives, nor is she allowed to conduct confinement cases. There are three component parts to Welfare Centre work. The Building itself to which those in need of attention are to be persuaded to come with their children for advice and attention, the Health Visitor whose part it is to visit from house to house to explain the advantages of the Centre and to persuade those in need of care and attention to avail themselves of this organisation, and lastly, but on this lastly the whole structure depends, the Lady Doctor to train the midwives as well as herself to give medical attention to those requiring it. In some places, as for instance in Shillong, the Centre is very adequately run by the Medical Superintendent of the Women's Hospital in conjunction with the Hospital and this is a most

excellent arrangement, but where you propose to have a lying-in ward with no matter how few beds, then it becomes utterly essential for a Lady Doctor to be in attendance for emergency cases.

Here I would like to stress one point. You receive a substantial grant from the Provincial Branch of the Countess of Dufferin Fund. This Association was started to supply Female Medical Aid to the women of India. The objects of the Association are :—

1. Medical tuition, for the teaching and training in India of women as doctors, hospital assistants, nurses and midwives.
2. Medical relief including—
 - (a) the establishment under female superintendence of dispensaries and cottage hospitals for the treatment of women and children ;
 - (b) the opening of female wards under female superintendence in existing hospitals and dispensaries and so on.

From this you will see how very clearly the obligation rests upon the recipients of any money from this source to see that the conditions upon which this grant is given are carried out. I have been empowered by the Committee of the Provincial Fund to say that they are ready to help you. You will also realise the obligation that rests upon the Committee of the Dufferin Fund to see that the provisions of the Association are carried out.

I have spoken very plainly and I hope that none will take offence, but the points to which I refer are matters which I have very much at heart and which I know from experience are matters which are really vital to the proposed conduct of Red Cross work. I have said before, I think, it is quite admirable that there has been so much enthusiasm and so great a response to the appeal for donations and subscriptions. I ask you all not to let your enthusiasm flag but to see

to it that this Welfare Centre becomes a model for the Province and a shining example of what can be done by a Community so generous and public-spirited as you have shown yourselves to be.

10. Opening of Shillong Health Exhibition. (April 1938).

It is my privilege as President of the Shillong Health Exhibition Committee to welcome you here today and to ask Your Excellency to open the Exhibition. It is generally recognised these days that good health is not a commodity to be purchased from a Doctor in the shape of pills or potions.

Our Doctors are the first to teach us that it is only by obeying the laws of hygiene that we can hope to achieve that physical fitness which enables us to carry out our duties successfully and in the words of our motto "to sing and be happy".

It is because we want to bring the knowledge of how to keep fit to every man, woman and child in the Province that we have organised this Health Exhibition on a very large scale, in the hope that it may be the first of a series of such Exhibitions to be held annually in different district headquarters of the Province.

Some people are sceptical as to how much real health knowledge is imparted by means of a Health Exhibition and I have often been told in regard to the Calcutta Health Exhibition that it is nothing but a "*lamasha*" where people go to enjoy themselves.

Well, we hope very much that people will come here also to enjoy themselves for we want everyone to realise that happiness and good health walk hand in hand.

I had many years of experience in the Calcutta Health Exhibition and I assure you that the progress visible in the demeanour and behaviour of the thousands who came I am tally to the Health Exhibition was quite astounding.

I was for several years Convenor of the Literature stall and again and again I was asked—"what literature have you got on good health. I don't want to know about diseases, but how to keep well." Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have done our best to emphasize, not only the beauty of good health, but the necessity for every one to cultivate good health. We have shewn diseases in order to teach everybody how to avoid them. We want every expectant mother to realise that not only is there safety and comfort for her in her time of travail, but that it is her bounden duty to give her child to-be the benefit of the skill and advice which is at her disposal. It is the right of every child to have a good start in life and every mother should demand it for her child. And so we hope that this Health Exhibition will be a really constructive piece of work in the nation-building activities of the Province. "For if cleanliness and good food and exercise are concerns of the individual man and woman, the means necessary to the attainment of all of them must be provided and protected by public authority." I would here like to quote from Sir John Anderson's speech at the final meeting of the Calcutta Health Exhibition in 1936 :—

"The object is one of the few forms of warfare that can really be called noble—the war against disease and against ignorance that breeds disease. The plan of campaign is a sound one. I may compare the annual exhibitions to a frontal attack on the powers of darkness: but such an attack needs to be followed up by the establishment of permanent clinics by which the ground won may be consolidated and the success achieved exploited in detail".

We are now delivering our frontal attack, but we do most sincerely ask that everybody will join with us in supplementing this Health Week by a sustained health effort throughout the rest of the year. National Health is everybody's business and to quote a recent article in Capital :-

“In the last few years, however, there has crept over the horizon a cloud, small as a man's hand, which has grown until it is as big as a million men's hands and that indeed is exactly what it is. India holds an enormous reservoir of voluntary labour power. In this line of voluntary, united effort lies India's only hope of salvation”

Before asking Your Excellency to open the Exhibition I would like on behalf of the Committee to tender our most grateful thanks to the Hon'ble the Speaker for lending us this most perfect site on which to hold our Exhibition and for being ever ready to meet our requirements in every respect.

It is over 6 months now since we started our plan of campaign and throughout that time the various office-bearers have worked unfalteringly and with untiring enthusiasm. I would like particularly to mention Major Haythornthwaite, our Honorary Secretary. Also Dr. Dey, Assistant Honorary Secretary, whose stalwart shoulders have borne the brunt of the burden, but who always shewed himself ready for yet more burdens. To all who have helped us with their donations, without which there could have been no Exhibition, with their encouragement and support, and for the most widespread enthusiasm I offer our heartfelt thanks. To the Editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* I offer our most grateful thanks for the Special Assam Health Supplement to be issued on Sunday, April 3rd.

I now ask Your Excellency kindly to open the Exhibition for us.

11. Closing of Shillong Health Exhibition, / April 1938.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, with this meeting we close the Shillong Health Lxhibition. There can be no doubt whatsoever as to the success of the Lxhibition. Not only newspaper accounts but our own eyes, bear witness to this.

Indeed it could not have been otherwise, a tour of the stalls on the opening day was enough to convince any one of the amazing amount of work which had been done by all to present their own particular section of Health teaching to the general public. From first to last the Demonstrators and Lecturers never ceased their efforts in talking, explaining and illustrating their meaning to the crowds. The visitors also played their part. Quite definitely people came to learn and many stall holders remarked to me on the intelligent questions which even illiterate people asked them. We were a very large team but I am very happy to be able to say that it w s a team in which every single inmember has played his or her part to the utmost of his or her ability.

We can congratulate ourselves on this wonderful team spirit and I do thank you one and all for your ungrudging, loyal co-operation in this cause. I would particularly like to thank our very hard working office-bearers, our Honorary Secretary, Major Haythornthwaite and his Assistant Honorary Secretaries and our Honorary Treasurer. I believe it is no secret that Dr. Dey has borne the lion's share of the burdens but what pleased me most of all was that after the strenuous labour involved in clearing up and collecting information for reports etc., his words to me were "now I am ready to work for the Anti-Tuberculosis Campaign if I may be permitted". This brings me to the most important part of my address.

Having brought this specific piece of work to a close we can see the effect that if all effort and energy in this field of action were to be concentrated in this manner it would have been only too easy to score a victory. But I venture no doubt to say to me, " You will remember Sir John Anderson's words which I quoted at the Opening of the Exhibition that it could be likened to a frontal attack on the powers of disease, but it must be followed up by a sustained effort throughout the year. We have already formed the idea of holding more Health Exhibitions in other centres in the Province, but they would only be part of the frontal attack not of the sustained effort.

The proper sequel to a Health Exhibition is the formation of clinics. In this, as you have read in our Red Cross Society's Report, Assam, is woefully lacking.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is indeed a serious reproach. What is to be done ? Individuals can do nothing by themselves. Infant Welfare Centres do not spring up like mushrooms overnight of their own volition. Municipalities have as much as they can do to maintain the essential services to a decent standard. What can we do towards ensuring the sustained effort throughout the year ? What I want to put before you is the proposal that a committee might be formed here and now as the result of this Health Exhibition representative of Government, Medical administrators, Red Cross Society and such people as have the welfare of the Province at heart to explore the possibilities of starting new centres and to carry on propaganda for this cause. I do feel that a permanent body of the sort is needed to provide directions and guidance, and above all to see that the interest created by Health Exhibitions is maintained afterwards instead of merely fading away when the Exhibition is over. Without some such central body I am sure that there is a real danger of effort being wasted and energies dissipated possibly in wrong directions.

I want to make it quite clear that the proposed Committee which will be called the Central Committee of Assam Health Exhibition will have the following structure of an Advisory and Central Committee. I would suggest it should have a secretariat which would be the office—bearers of this Central Committee or exhibition Committee which is about to be formed. In this way all the properties of the Central Exhibition Committee such as models, etc., will remain in the property of the new Committee. The new Committee to whom in the future any help would be made for help and advice towards holding another Health Exhibition in a District Headquarters.

It would be the function of this Committee to explore the possibilities of Annual Exhibitions being held and to act in an advisory capacity to any bodies wishing to start Welfare Centres. As an instance of the sort of thing I contemplate this Committee to take up, I would cite the following : -

There has been a very strong demand for the Tuberculosis section of the Health Exhibition to be sent on tour and it would seem natural that the expense of this should be borne by the Anti-Tuberculosis Association of Assam but, I come to the most distressing thing I could have to say, and that is that the Anti-Tuberculosis Association of Assam not only cannot undertake any such enterprise but, without further substantial support our Tuberculosis Dispensary No. 1, the only one of its kind in Assam, will have to close down at the end of its first year of working. During the last year they had Rs.1,000 from Central Headquarters, which they now tell us we will not be able to have any longer. They had Rs.2,000 from His Excellency's Discretionary Grant which, as every body knows, cannot allot recurring grants, and they cannot hope for help from the King Emperor's Appeal Fund until that Fund is closed.

So you will see from this sad tale that it is not possible for the Anti-Tuberculosis Association of Assam to incur the expense of sending this Tuberculosis Section round the Province, but this is just the sort of service however which the Health Committee I am asking you to consider would be in a position to undertake.

It only remains for me to thank you one and all for the outstanding success of this wonderful Exhibition of ours.

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12. Opening of King George V Silver Jubilee Maternity Home, Karimganj (February 18, 1940).

I deem it a great privilege to have been asked to open these two Buildings and it is a great pleasure to both His Excellency and to myself to be here to-day. Both these Buildings are dedicated to the service of women and children in whose welfare I think you know I am very specially interested. No mother who has experienced the sufferings of childbirth can contemplate the thought of such pain and suffering unalleviated and unintended without feelings of pity and compassion and a burning desire to do whatever one can to change such a state of affairs. An Editor of a leading Indian paper in a very appreciative article wrote some time ago that I "appeared to have a passion for social service". Perhaps he may find the reason here.

That I am not alone in being moved to feelings of compassion is shewn in the address we have heard from Dr. Kundu. You have had generous donors here in Karimganj—Srijut Brindaban Chandra Roy who has enabled the Dai Training School to have suitable quarters and Sreejukta Suruchi Bala Roy Chaudhurani to whose warmhearted generosity is due this King

George V Silver Jubilee Maternity Home. I would not omit to mention either those who generously gave the land and the late Sreejut Bama Charan Dev who gave a large donation for equipment. It is sad that he is not able to see the fulfilment of the cause which he helped. The good he did lives after him.

I have studied the record of your activities carefully. I see that you have received Rs.1,350 from the Countess of Dufferin Fund. The Local Board promised a similar amount, but that promise has not been fulfilled. Again, in the recurring expenditure the Countess of Dufferin Fund gives you Rs.500 per annum and your Local Board and Municipal Board promised respectively Rs.350 and Rs.150. Neither undertaking has been fulfilled, and you are now faced with an ever greater recurring expenditure.

The Countess of Dufferin Fund is a Provincial organisation with very restricted resources and is concerned to do the maximum amount of good to the whole Province. Before allotting grants in response to requests for help the Committee stipulates that half the total cost shall be borne by local funds,—in other words the Association sets out to help those who are prepared to help themselves. I am sure you will agree that it is neither right nor reasonable that one place should take all they can get and then fold their hands in sleep and say "The Dufferin will provide". In fact it is the settled policy of the Dufferin Fund not to provide except in such places where it is obvious that local civic authorities are not only aware of their obligations but determined to fulfil them. You, the leading people in this town, have made a splendid response, but it will be of no avail without the sustained effort which is the duty of the local civic authorities.

I spoke before of pity and compassion but I would speak now of your obligations to the generations yet unborn.

May I quote to you what I believe to be a very real truth ? "I believe at the bottom of infant mortality, high or low, is good or bad motherhood. First, concentrate on the mother. What the mother is, the children are. Let us glorify, dignify, purify motherhood by every means in our power. Let us see to the nursing mother in every way ; nourish the mother and you feed the child".

And again,

"The State cannot save the child ; but it can help the mother to save it".

In every case Prevention is better than cure, and infinitely less expensive in the long run.

By building up sturdy children you will be laying the foundation for a robust generation who will be equipped to withstand the onslaughts of disease.

Gentlemen of the Local Board and the Municipal Board, if I have seemed to criticise you somewhat severely it is only because I see so clearly the wonderful opportunity that is before you and I am so anxious that your first splendid effort should not end there but that you should give lasting effect to the generous impulses which have given this scheme such a successful start, remembering always that it is the sustained effort which is the essential requisite and which is the ultimate responsibility of Local Self-Government.

I look forward to seeing your progress in the future and I am sure that great benefits will be brought to this Subdivision by your efforts.

13. Opening of the Lady Amy Reid Hospital, Chattak (April 4th, 1940)

I deem myself exceedingly fortunate in that I have been given this delightful task of opening your Hospital and Dispensary for you.

Had we been living in the bad old days when medical science was occupied entirely with the curative side of its work, the Factory would have been put up first and set in running order, and after that, as the need arose, a Hospital would have had to be built in which damaged human lives would have been repaired as far as possible.

It is a significant fact, and a splendid augury for the future that here the first building to be opened is the Hospital and Dispensary, even before the factory is working. I consider that in doing this the Company has shewn itself to be in the forefront of industrial enterprise.

In the Final Report "Industrial Health and Efficiency" of 1918 it is written that "it is the worker's individual health, mental development and moral well-being which alone can guarantee effectual labour not only in social relationship, between master and man, and between man and man, but as regards the physiological basis of labour. The worker's capital is his health and capacity to work. If that be impaired his outlook is jeopardised, and he may easily become a prey to disease and a liability (rather than an asset) to the State. The public health, including that of the worker, depends therefore all the time upon removing the occasion and cause of physical inefficiency and not waiting for the advent of disease. It must be something positive, the conservation of health and physical fitness". We see here how great a part preventive medicine can play. This is one of the greatest discoveries of our age but it behoves us not to criticise our forefathers from our own more enlightened standpoint because it was due to the devoted labours of the more humanitarian among them that the system of preventive care has been evolved. Rather it is for us to accept gratefully the results of their great struggle and to prove ourselves worthy of the new order of the present times. The pioneers in this struggle were inspired by social and moral motives rather than by scientific or economic evidence, but thanks to a vast amount of

investigation and research, experiment and failure, we have a great inheritance of knowledge and enlightenment which should revolutionise the whole field of industrial labour. I am sure that the Directors of this Company, who have obviously spent so much thought and money on the physical well-being of their employees, will not have overlooked the consideration of the mental and moral aspects of their social welfare.

A very important part which this Dispensary is to play is in helping the local inhabitants who are not employees of this Company. There is no doubt that it will be of the very greatest value to the whole District, and when the X-Ray apparatus is installed, which has been forecast by the Directors of this Company, the whole of the Surma Valley will have cause to be grateful to this Company for their enlightened and altruistic outlook.

In a world where there is so much sadness and suffering it is most cheering to be asked to open a building such as this. I feel sure that the relations here between employers and employees where the welfare of labour is so well-organised will ever be those of frankness and cordiality, of singleness of purpose, each for all and all for each, and I trust you will be spared the experience, too common, alas, in Assam and elsewhere, of having those good relations shattered by the evil counsels of self-seeking and misguided agitators who will neither work themselves nor let others work.

I thank you for the welcome which you have given me, I appreciate it more than I can say. I have for many years in Bengal had the great pleasure of working with one of your Directors, Mr. J. C. Mukharjee, and I would like to say here that I have never worked with anyone more true and loyal, a steadfast friend and true collaborator. This friendship which I value adds to the great pleasure it is to me to come here to-day. I will not detain you any longer but give you my best wishes for a prosperous and happy future and express my great pleasure at opening the "Lady Amy Reid Hospital and Dispensary".

14. First Annual General Meeting of the Tuberculosis Association of Assam (16th of April, 1941)

This is our first Annual Meeting of the Tuberculosis Association of Assam. It constitutes the first of the milestones along the road to that delectable land where the scourge of Tuberculosis will be under control, to that time when the confidence of the public will be such that there will be no more concealment of the disease, with the risks attendant upon such concealment. Instead, those who find themselves attacked by this disease will hasten hopefully to the well-equipped Clinic which we hope to have shortly here in Shillong. And no doubt in other Districts, to receive the specialised treatment which will be available and to learn how to live at home without bringing the risk of infection to those they love. It is not so long ago that the same dread of this disease existed in England and other countries. It should therefore be no surprise to us to meet with it here. Our greatest regret is that had we not met with opposition our Shillong Clinic would now have been built at least up to the roof. We can only trust that the efforts which are being made by the enlightened leaders of the people will result in a better understanding of the benefits we confidently expect this Clinic to confer upon the people of this town first and foremost. We hope it may prove to be a model Clinic for the whole province and a centre from which specialised knowledge in an ever widening stream will flow to every corner of the Province.

We owe our grateful thanks to the Government of Assam which has made such a generous contribution to the scheme put forward by the Association and especially to the Honourable Minister for Health who has sponsored the scheme so wholeheartedly and always taken such a great interest in it. Without this generous support it would have been many years before we could have collected sufficient funds under the present circumstances of stress and strain of war.

It is a matter of great regret that so far no District from the Plains has put up any scheme which has proved acceptable to the Medical Sub-Committee. The Hill Districts have their own problems but we are glad to know that the Naga Hills, Sadiya Frontier Tract and the North Cachar Hills have all gone well ahead with their schemes. The Garo Hills and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills have transferred all, or nearly all, their collections to the Central Funds.

In almost all cases the Districts have put up very grandiose schemes which our Medical Advisers deem would be quite impracticable. It cannot be too widely known that no proposal to build a Sanatorium, or Wards for Patients, can be approved unless there is either a Resident Doctor and other staff provided for in the recurring expenses of the new institution, or the Ward is in direct proximity to the facilities provided by the Civil Hospital. Dr. Frimodt Muller—and there is no greater authority on the subject in India—has always insisted that the first and vital step in anti-tuberculosis work must be the Clinic and its attendant Home Visitor. The Districts may feel that the progress made has been very slow but in all fairness it must be admitted that the rate of progress can only be determined by the promptitude of the District Committees in formulating their own schemes. Some schemes are in a nebulous state but it is hoped that these will materialise soon into concrete form.

All Districts will need Home Visitors trained in Tuberculosis work to be attached to their Clinics and to organise home treatment. The training for these Home Visitors is a six months' course. It had been hoped to send several from Assam but only one has gone for the next course. Courses are held twice a year and every District should begin at once to arrange for the training of their prospective Home Visitors. Candidates should be from the locality in which they hope to serve. The fees for training and

all the expenses attached to the sending of candidates will have to be paid by Districts from their own funds which are with us but arrangements will be made by the Centre. Names may have to be placed on a Waiting List as candidates will have to go to the Training Courses, which have been organised in Calcutta, and Assam will have to share in the available vacancies. The Honorary Secretary will give all further details to Districts if required but I understand full information has already been sent round to all Districts.

We have reached a stage now where the drive for the original capital sums required must now be diverted into two channels,—the drive to convert the capital sums collected in the various districts into a series of well-planned Clinics which will form the sound foundation on which the whole of the Tuberculosis effort of the Province will be built, and the drive to ensure the necessary recurring funds to carry on the work which will have been started. There is only one way to ensure the latter object, and that is by Membership of the Association. Every body cannot give large sums but every body can and should give a little. This is not a charity which can be shelved until after the war. It is a real and everpresent danger right in the midst of every one of us, a cloud which although it may seem small as a man's hand to those of us who do not realise the extent of our danger will inevitably grow until the shadow of it covers the whole land. Should that happen there will not be sufficient resources available to wage a successful fight with this menace. The Voice of Public Opinion may not be very loud at present, but it is there, and the question it asks is "If the rapid spread of this disease can be stayed then why is it not being done?" To that Voice the reply of our Association is "Give us the sinews of war and we can and will do something which will not only fight your battles for you but will win them too".

15. Inaugural Meeting of the Auxiliary Nursing Service for Assam September 22nd, 1941)

We have come here to-day in order to consider the Auxiliary Nursing Service for India and to see how we can best work it for Assam. The terms of Service have been distributed and I hope that you have all had time to consider them thoroughly and to discuss them with your friends.

I wonder how many of you walking here to-day through the unbroken peace of these Hills stopped to try and imagine for a moment what life must be like in the awful carnage of War. Perhaps you thought to yourselves " all this does not affect me in any way— it is not likely that we shall have to suffer the horrors of bombardment here in Shillong, I have my own family to consider, I cannot be expected to volunteer."

We in Britain lived too in a fool's Paradise. For years many said, " No one wants war, Hitler has sworn not to shed a drop of German blood, those who say otherwise are war— mongers and should ' e suppressed" Look at Britain to-day, her famous cities ravaged, her people homeless, her young men and women all serving in one capacity or another. In spite of it all she holds her head proudly, bloody but unbowed, but had we but listened in past days to those who cried in the wilderness we should not have been caught unprepared with a leeway of at least : years to make up.

Listen to Hitler speaking on Poland : " Nature is cruel, therefore we too may be cruel. If I can send the flower of the German nation into the hell of war without the smallest pity of the spilling of precious German blood, then surely I have the right to remove millions of an inferior race that breeds like vermin."

Listen again to the Nazi Bishop Muller speaking just before the outbreak of war :—" Mercy is an un-German conception. The word mercy is one of the numerous terms of the Bible with which we can have nothing to do."

In India, thank God, mercy is still one of the greatest virtues. Long may it remain so and let us therefore unite in resisting the menace of Hitler and fighting that pagan materialistic race which despises mercy.

There is one way, and one way only, to avert disaster and that is to be prepared against it. Before this war can be won we shall have to pass through much tribulation; we need the help of every single person, weight of numbers is just as irresistible behind the lines as in the front line. It is the whole effort we want and we must each of us be prepared to help in every way.

You are being asked today to form a solid Nursing Reserve so that this may be called upon if occasion should arise. The terms offered are very generous and should be acceptable to all kinds of candidates. You may volunteer for overseas if you wish, you may confine your obligations to "anywhere in India" or you may be unable to leave your own locality and your services may be utilised there. You will be trained to a certain extent and if you so wish it afterwards you may be taken into the regular Nursing Service if you prove acceptable.

Those of you who have been asking in vain for training in the Nursing profession are now being offered a wonderful chance. You may not be called up, it is true, but even if you are not required your 3 months' training will always stand you in good stead and will constitute some claim on preferential selection in future years.

Many of you know of Florence Nightingale, often called the Lady of the Lamp. It was she who was so shocked by the horrors of war unmitigated by any nursing, that she set herself by superhuman efforts to cope with the appalling conditions of the Crimean War.

From her selfless endeavours was built up the splendid Army Nursing Service of modern times. With the feeble light shed by a hand lantern she passed from

one wounded soldier to another giving help and comfort. It is because the Authorities know that this Nursing Service is not enough to cope with the unprecedented expansion of the Armies, with the devastating effects of modern mechanised warfare, that they are calling on women all over India to come forward to help their menfolk through the terrible times.

Surely we cannot pass by on the other side ! No woman worthy of the name, of the great heritage of womanhood which is to minister to the needs of suffering humanity can answer, "this is no concern of mine."

It is our right and our privilege to so minister to the needs of the suffering that we may, please God, build them up once again to the full vigour of their manhood.

I want to read to you a very beautiful poem which was recited in London on the Red Cross Flag Day :

THE LAMP

When first the Lamp was lighted,
 Within the caves of hell,
 The dead, heaped with the dying,
 Were rotting where they fell.
 For death men lay and waited,
 In pain, alone, afraid,
 But when the Lamp was lighted
 A woman saw—and stayed.

The Lamp that first was lighted,
 With Mercy for its flame,
 Showed clear, upon our honour,
 The creeping rust of shame.
 But there, to our redemption,
 Amid the darkened camp
 There walked, with light and healing,
 The Lady of the Lamp.

The Lamp that Love had lighted
 Burned clear and beacon Bright
 And others ran to kindle
 Their conscience at its light.
 And through the smoke of battle,
 The yellow flame of war,
 The Lamp that lit the many
 Burned whiter than before.
 Thenceforth the Lamp of Mercy,
 Has shown upon our way
 Through all the nights of error,
 The darkness of our day.
 And in the storm of folly
 And through the gales of doubt
 The flame has never flickered,
 The Lamp has not gone out.
 The oil of benediction
 That feeds the living light
 Is ours to find and furnish ;
 Our duty and our right.
 We pledge, till war has perished
 Beneath time's shifting sands,
 The flame shall never falter—
 The Lamp is in our hands.

16. Foundation Stone-Laying Ceremony of the Chest Clinic in Shillong (3rd January, 1942)

We live in the Hills and perhaps that may account for the singularly difficult road we have had to travel before arriving at this stage of our journey.

Our objective, as you well know, is the erection of a diagnostic Chest Clinic so adequately equipped with the necessary scientific apparatus that it may serve not only the needs of the town of Shillong but also those of the whole Province.

I hope very much that I will not be misunderstood in anything I say to-day. I feel like Agag that I must treat delicately !

You have had the facts laid before you very clearly by Major Haythornthwaite in his exceedingly good pamphlet entitled " He that hath ears to hear let him hear". I commend that pamphlet very strongly to all who still have qualms as to the advisability of erecting this Clinic in the midst of Shillong town. I can only leave it to your common sense to realise that already the Chest Clinic has been functioning for 4 years in this very place and not only has no one been any the worse for it but a lot of people have very great cause to be grateful for the ministration of those in charge of it. And I would draw your attention to the fact on which stress is laid in the pamphlet, that there are to be no extra beds in the Clinic.

The whole responsibility of combating this disease which is so widely dreaded has been borne by Major Haythornthwaite. I think he would be the first to admit that in those early days he undertook the work from a sense of devotion to duty and with very little confidence that those efforts would achieve any significant results. The principle of the medical profession that no matter how ill the patient is the medico must do his utmost for him has here brought a most uplifting reward and I know that Major Haythornthwaite could tell us if he would, many happy stories of restoration to health from the depths of dark despair of those caught by this disease. Shillong owes now and hereafter a great debt of gratitude to Major Haythornthwaite for his devoted labours. Dr. Ganguly came to us from Calcutta as a trained Home Visitor 4 years ago. The fact that he has been so long with us here is proof of his interest in his work and of the value we put upon his services.

Dr. P. Dey has given many years of voluntary work and has well earned the right to the specialised training which he is now undergoing in Madras. We look forward to great help from him on his return.

Others too have given of their services voluntarily. This is a fine tradition of the medical profession, that they give part of their services free to Hospitals and receive experience in return. The more Doctors who take the opportunity of gaining this specialised knowledge the better for the Province.

In all the many vicissitudes connected with the beginning of Tuberculosis work in the Province we have had the wise judgment based upon experience over many years of Dr. Roberts. The people of Shillong and especially the Khasi community do not need me to remind them of what they owe to one who may well be called their little Father. The fact that we have at all times received guidance from Dr. Roberts should be to all the Khasis without exception a guarantee that the decision to build our new Clinic here is one which will result in the greatest ultimate good to the community. Is it too much to hope and to ask for, that this building may grow not only with the materials of which it is to be built but also with the goodwill of every one in Shillong ?

We have to thank the late Prime Minister, Sir Muhammad Saadulla, and his Ministry, especially the Minister for Health, Mr. Hirendra Chakravarty, for their unwavering championship of the schemes put forward by the Tubercolosis Association of Assam. Splendid as the response was to the King Emperor's appeal from the Province our resources would have been utterly inadequate of themselves to meet the needs of the situation. For the unfailing encouragement and support we have received I offer them our deep gratitude. Also to Colonel Shortt, Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals, and our Chairman, for his steadfast and valuable leadership. I am indeed glad that Colonel Hesterlow who was our Honorary Secretary for so long, is here with us to-day.

To Dr. Dey, who has laboured early and late to bring this scheme to fruition I would express our warm thanks and my personal gratitude.

To all the sufferers from this disease in the Province, I would like to bring words of comfort and of good cheer. The way may be long and dark but the Lamp of Hope has been kindled for them. In the fullness of time this Battle too will be won, the Day will dawn and the shadows flee away.

To that end it is indeed my happy privilege to lay the Foundation Stone of this Chest Clinic.

17. Opening of Dufferin Hospital, Calcutta. (March, 1939)

It is now 5 years since Lady Willingdon wrote that she was shocked to see the old Hospital falling to pieces everywhere. She would indeed be glad if she could see this new building which has arisen to take its place. She commented then on the wonderful work that was being done by Dr. Torrance and her staff. Whatever the difficulties, and some of us know a little bit how great those difficulties are, that wonderful work has been going steadily on. I have no doubt whatsoever that same wonderful work will continue to go on but what I want to stress to-day is that until there is proper accommodation provided for the augmented staff that is required to run this Hospital, it cannot do the maximum work for which it has been built. Surely the labourer is worthy of his hire. It is not in the general make up of doctors and nurses to complain of their own discomforts. Their thoughts first and foremost are of their patients, but surely we, who have so much admiration for the grand work they are doing, do not want to wait until grievances become past bearing before we take steps to provide them with adequate accommodation.

I know of old, and I have always said, that Calcutta is the most generous city in the world. Never have I begged from Calcutta but I have received in response full measure, pressed down and running over.

Too well I know the many demands that are made on a long suffering public, but I do ask you to join with me in making this one great effort to complete this grand scheme and let our new Dufferin Hospital have a fair start.

Since the Nurses Registration Act, which was so badly needed, became law the standard of nursing has gone up and it is the Dufferin Hospital which is called upon to provide a training ground for these nurses for general as well as for midwifery work.

We all know the terrible scarcity of nurses not only throughout this Province but in all India and yet I am very sure the doctors present will agree with me that without good nursing many of their most serious cases have little hope of recovery.

When Lady Linlithgow came on her first visit to Calcutta, I heard her make a most moving appeal at a prize-giving function at a girls' school for girls to take up the profession of nursing.

There is a great awakening going on to-day amongst the women of India. The cause of suffering women and children is very much in the forefront of many women's organisations but the problem is so vast that it cannot be solved without the combined efforts of Government and voluntary organisations. What I would plead for to-day is that those who give up their lives to nurse the sick and suffering should receive the utmost deference from all mankind. In the worst slums in England a nurse's uniform will protect the wearer from every form of indignity and will ensure for her the courtesy and help even of the roughest of those with whom she comes in contact. This state of affairs can only be brought about by the force of public opinion and I ask every one of the people of this Province to help to build up a public opinion which will ensure not only the safety, physical and moral, of their nurses but also provide help for them in their often arduous duties.

I have said little about the Hospital itself because we can all see for ourselves the magnificent building it is, well worthy of the humanitarian work for which it has been built, but I would like to congratulate most warmly your Architect for this great achievement, your Committee and particularly your Secretary for the vast amount of work which they must have given to it and above all your most generous public for this lasting memorial of the generosity of the citizens of this great city.

I have two announcements which I wish to make --Lady Brabourne had intended to make a donation of Rs. 3,000 for the purchase of an Operating Table and a Shadowless Lamp. This money has been made available ; and lastly I am asking your Chairman to accept on your behalf my own personal donation of Rs. 1,000 towards the Nurses' Quarters as a thank offering for my husband's recovery to health.

I shall now have very much pleasure in declaring the new Building of the Dufferin Hospital open.

18. Annual Meeting of the Lady Minto Nursing Association, Bengal Branch (1939).

From my own experience in my own family I would like to pay my tribute to the excellence of the nursing of the Minto Sisters.

I think perhaps it is not easy for people who live in Calcutta amongst the amenities of a great city to realise just how invaluable it is to those who live in the Mofussil to have such a Nursing Staff available to call upon in times of great urgency. I am sure that many of those subscribers in the Mofussil feel, as I know they feel in Assam, that we could not do without our Nursing Sisters. We owe them a great debt of gratitude for the very willing way in which they carry out their duties.

19. Khasi Nursing Division of the St. John Ambulance Association 2nd August, 1941,

First of all I must say how glad we are to see so many people here today.

You are no strangers to me and I have lived amongst you long enough to realise the great potentialities of the women and girls of your race. I have given proof of the trust I have in you by being instrumental in the appointment of one of your number as Local Adviser for the Girl Guides, of Assam and in the choice of one as the Physical Instructress for Assam. The most shining example is your Lady Minister Miss Dunn, who I am so glad to see here today. It is a saying, and one of which you may well be proud, that Khasis are born Nurses, but I go further than that. For 100 years the Khasis have been in contact with the precepts and principles inculcated by the Welsh Missionaries. They have been quick to seize upon this opportunity to raise themselves from their backwardness. From the character training they have received they have so profited that I have no hesitation in saying of the women of the Khasi Hills that they are rapidly becoming born Leaders. I am therefore confident that a proposal to form a Khasi Nursing Division of the St. John Ambulance Association will receive your fullest support.

This proposal has come direct from our new Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals, Colonel Shortt, whom I am very happy to introduce to you today. It did not take Colonel Shortt very long to perceive what a valuable recruiting ground the Khasi women afforded and to resolve to give scope to their latent genius for Nursing and to their loyal and off-expressed wish to be allowed to help to the utmost of their capacity.

I was very happy when he asked me if this Meeting could be held at Government House and also asked me to preside because, for one thing it associates me with you all in this new effort which is being

lawn here today, and for another, because it gives me an opportunity of letting you know something of the love and admiration which is in my heart for the women of the Khasi Hills.

The time I have left with you is very short and I shall be leaving many well-known and trusted friends among you, but I shall never cease to watch your progress from afar, and I know very well that those qualities of heart and that steadfastness of character which I have known and loved in you will find ever increasing scope in the future of your Province. As far as the immediate purpose of this meeting is concerned, I am convinced that you have only to realise the importance of this St. John's Ambulance training to take full advantage of it. I know that more than 50 Khasi Women have volunteered for A.R.P. duties and they will realise that unless one is trained to give skilled help one is of very limited use in a time of national emergency. So to you I say, as I have been saying for 4 years to the Girl Guides of Assam, train yourselves now so that you may be ready when the day of testing comes and so will you not be found wanting.

20. Meeting of the Darrang Branch of the Lady Hardinge Linen League and of the Red Cross Work Party at Tezpur (19th February, 1942)

I am very glad of the opportunity to meet you all here today. I understand that I am addressing for the most part a newly organised Branch of the Lady Hardinge Linen League and a newly formed Work Party and it is a very great satisfaction to me to see such a large gathering here today. I shall look forward with great interest to seeing the results of your work under the able guidance of Mrs. Guha. I understand that some of you have come over 50 miles to meet me here today, and I appreciate it very much.

I am very happy to receive from Mr. Guha the sum of Rs. 152 being, you will see, £1 for his subscriptions to the Lady Hardinge Linen League. I think this is a splendid response and I can assure you that it is your own civil hospital which will benefit from your generosity.

I am told that many of you had never heard of the Lady Hardinge Linen League and of the work which it is doing, now of course under great difficulties. Mrs. Guha will have read the latest Annual Report to you so that I need not worry you with figures but I would like to tell you my own experiences over five years. Whenever I visited a Hospital in the early days I was always met by the same appeal, an urgent request for sheets, pillow slips, towels and materials for Hospital garments. After this Assam Branch of the Lady Hardinge Linen League was formed Hospital after Hospital was added to the list of those receiving an annual contribution of Hospital Linen up to the very limit of our resources. Now there is hardly a Hospital in Assam in which I do not recognise the familiar striped material adopted by the Linen League. This material by the way is an indigenous product of Assam and so twice benefits, first the weaver and then the wearer! Thirty-four Hospitals have been helped by gifts and this fresh accession of Members will, I hope, enable one, if not two, more Hospital to be added to this list. The only expenses are the publishing of the Annual Report by which we hope to secure an ever widening circle of Members and a few postage expenses. So for the small sum of Rs. 2 a year you can have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping your own people in your own Hospitals to much greater comfort than they could otherwise receive. As we all know there is much healing in comfort when one is sick.

To turn to the Red Cross. You may know that there are now 63 Work Parties in the Province, of which one is already here in Tezpur, which has been working since the beginning. Some of these are composed of European Ladies, some of Indian Ladies

and some of both European and Indian Ladies, but whether composed of European or of Indian Ladies they all work for the same aims and objects which are principally for the relief of suffering and distress among the wounded soldiers of the Indian Army, the Royal Indian Navy, the Royal Air Force, and the Indian Air Force and all branches of the Forces and for providing unwounded Members of these Forces with warm extra clothing and many other amenities to lighten the hardships of campaigning. Your own new Work Party will, I understand, have 50 Members of whom 12 come from Behali. I am sure that we shall see great results from this effort of yours, and I thank you all for this generous response to our appeal for more workers.

I do not think anyone could contemplate with feelings short of consternation what conditions would have been like without all these extras supplied by Work Parties.

I would like to give you a few instances of how these Work Parties are called upon to meet urgent needs. There was a time when India was suddenly asked to produce 50,000 Dysentry Pads, each Province was allotted a certain number and within a very short time all of them were on the way to their destination.

With the rapid expansion of the Army and the extension of the war to Syria, Iraq and Iran a special appeal was put out by His Excellency the Viceroy, and backed by His Excellency the Governor, for war comforts for the troops before winter and the output from Assam was increased by half as much again.

When the menace of war drew nearer to India it became imperative to make preparation against possible Air Raids over Assam and for the provision of Hospital facilities for civilian casualties. The Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals addressed an urgent appeal to our Committee for Hospital garments and bandages—which he said he was quite unable to provide from any other source. The Red Cross, as

you no doubt know, looks after the civilians whose injuries have been caused by enemy action as well as the Member, of the Forces. Between December 2nd and 29th 410 pairs of pyjamas were made and sent up to the Depot and 410 nightgowns for women and children were also produced. Now I ask you what would have been the plight of those men, women and children of India had these Air Raids taken place and no garments or bandages been ready for those who became casualties? You may say they have not yet been needed, that is true, but why not? Simply and solely because of the bulwark of Troops, British, Indian and Imperial, not to mention Burmese and Chinese, who are fighting so stubbornly and heroically in Burma and have done so in Malaya in order to keep such Raids away from India. Take the case of France. It took only 3 weeks for the Axis Forces to overrun France and bring her to capitulation, and what has been her fate since? Direst poverty, hunger, disease and continuous acts of terrorisation by the German Gestapo, the shooting of hostages, the death penalty for the possession of arms and for many other so-called crimes. On December 7th Japan launched War upon the Far East and but for the heroism of those men for whom you are going to work Japanese Troops would now be carrying out the same persecution of your country as Axis Forces have perpetrated in France. That danger is not yet averted, it is only delayed, but to delay the enemy's plans may well be to frustrate them. Japan is throwing every atom of her strength into her war effort but what of us? If every man and woman in this great country had resolved to throw their whole strength into the War it might have been that the war would never have got so close to India.

What we can do now let us do to our utmost, let us work all we can to help the brave men fighting for our safety, let us save all we can to help pay for the munitions without which their bravery is of no avail and let us train ourselves to be of use in a time of emergency should we be called upon to endure any of

the horrors of war. I look to you, to everyone of you, to uphold the dignity of the womanhood of India just as the men of India have earned for themselves a reputation second to none

21. Inauguration of the Silver Thimble Fund. (March, 1940)

It is an encouraging thought that the failure of a worn out silver thimble to protect its wearer was responsible for launching such a beneficent effort as the Silver Thimble Fund. We have heard of a pricked finger causing the sleeping Princess to sleep for a hundred years, but in this case a pricked finger was able to bring many wounded to immediate medical aid and to respite from pain and suffering.

Lady Linlithgow, who has sponsored this appeal and asked all Provinces to support it to the best of their ability, has made it clear that it is not money that is asked for. It is truly the worn out silver thimbles, the broken and discarded jewellery, the old and useless "junk" which is apt to clutter up so many houses which is what we ask for. These things are merely junk to their owners, but they can become the means perhaps of saving life and certainly of alleviating pain and discomfort by providing the money for flying Ambulances.

Which of us, even in the best of health, has not suffered from the journey to Shillong from Calcutta?

Those of us who saw the Aeroplane circling round Shillong on Monday and realised it had taken 52 minutes to reach us from Calcutta will be well able to appreciate how much suffering a flying ambulance can alleviate.

In launching this Appeal we may well stress the fact that we need to make no apology for making this further demand. We are in fact public benefactors for our purpose is to relieve members of the public of all

the unwanted accumulation of broken and useless ornaments. All we ask of them is that they should spend a little time and take a little trouble to collect such things and send them to us, so that we may utilise their damaged goods to help to mend broken lives.

I would like to express my warm thanks to Mrs. Christie for having so enthusiastically taken over the organisation of this Fund for me. I asked her to be its President but she said she infinitely preferred the role of a hard-working Secretary. Sir Muhammad Saadulla was then asked to grace the position, but he also said he preferred the role of a humble worker of the Committee, and in compliance with his very special request I find myself with yet another Robe of office cast about my shoulders! All I can say is that I am more than proud, more than happy to be associated in whatever way anyone thinks I may be able to help most, with any and every effort which has for its object to help those who are giving their health and strength, and in some cases their lives in upholding the cause of justice and Freedom.

I would like to thank all those who have come today and who have consented to serve on this Committee and help Mrs. Christie.

This work could not be in more capable hands and I look forward to seeing a great response throughout the Province.

III. INDUSTRIES AND SELF-HELP FROM POVERTY TO WEALTH,

22. Visit to the Women's Co-operative Industrial Home in Dum Dum 1939

For very many years I have watched and admired Lady Bose's work for widows. It has always struck me that she has dealt with this most difficult problem in a very practical manner and here we have fresh proof of that same practical sense in this new venture started by her on co-operative lines.

The very finest help that any one can give is to help people to help themselves. This is the whole essence of this work here. It is not perhaps so easy as it sounds ; not only have the workers to be trained to work but in these days of keen competition to find a market for their products is no easy matter, and here we have a fresh proof of Lady Bose's organising ability in her suggestion of coming to some working agreement with the Mills.

I am convinced that if hand-loom products strive to compete on their own ground with machine-made goods, the result is foredoomed to failure, or at any rate that the margin of profit obtainable must be such as to be almost worthless. By adhering, however, to certain lines of production there is a profit to be made.

I have gone into this question of hand-weaving versus machine-made goods very thoroughly with a leading organiser of hand-woven goods in England. His experience over a great number of years is that there is a demand for hand-woven goods which shew beauty of colour, distinctive design and originality of treatment, and this is the sort of work which I venture to suggest that you should concentrate on here.

It seems to me that this Co-operative Industrial Home is a natural corollary of the Widows' Home that has been running for many years under Lady Bose's active supervision.

We have now reached this further stage when the trained workers from that Home are helped to become wage-earning members of the community.

I congratulate Lady Bose and her Committee on this very signal development of all her many years of devoted labour on behalf of the Widows of this Province.

I commend this Society to all who have at heart the building up of the quantities of self-help and self-respect among the members of that community who have not only suffered the misery of bereavement but who have also had to endure the most undeserved odium of their fellow-men.

In giving you all my very best wishes for the success of this venture I would like to say how happy I am to have been able to come here to-day and to thank you for the welcome which you have given me.

23. Opening of the Mission Sale, Darjeeling (1939)

It is a very real pleasure to me to have the privilege opening this Mission Sale, more particularly so as I had the honour of doing so once before, some years ago, and I am sure I shall find that great progress has been made in the interval in the quality and scope of the work produced.

I am sure everyone will agree that one of the finest ways of helping people is to teach them to do beautiful work and to produce beautiful things. The urge to create is inborn in everybody. We all know the joy a child experiences in producing something he has made all by himself. The craftsman takes the greatest pride in the "finish" of his goods, and perhaps one of the greatest causes of discontent in the world to-day is to be found in the purely mechanical character of so many people's work.

It is good to find here so much individual achievement and to realise how the appreciation of handicraft is spreading, thereby creating a larger market for goods of beauty and of individuality.

That is one aspect of your work, and the other is that it is a far finer thing to help people to help themselves than to give indiscriminate charity. It is also far harder but infinitely more worth while. No one likes to feel themselves a burden, either on their families or on the public, and giving people the chance to work for themselves is to give them self-respect and a feeling of independence which is of infinite value.

Everyone who has had anything to do with Industries, Cottage or otherwise, knows that the greatest problem lies in providing a market and I feel sure that many of the Missions who are exhibiting their work here to-day would be very hard put to it to sell their goods without the kindly help this Sale affords.

It is the co-ordinated effort which is so valuable, the combination of the skilled teacher, the industrious worker and the buyer who has discrimination and uses beautiful things.

Fashions change and the market depends on a sure knowledge of what are the present-day needs. Many can help in this way, as we had good cause to know in Calcutta, and it is the suggestions made by the leaders of fashion which are of such tremendous value to these whose sales depend upon pleasing the taste of the general public.

I shall not take up more of your time but in thanking you for welcoming me here to-day I would like to say how much I appreciate that welcome and how very glad I am to be able to come. I now have much pleasure in declaring the Scots Mission Industries Sale of Work open.

**24. Inauguration of Assam Industries Association
April, 1938,**

Ever since I came to Assam I have wanted to start the same sort of Association in Assam as the Bengal Home Industries Association in Bengal. That was formed in 1917 because Lord Carmichael said it was ridiculous that in a country with an indigenous silk industry he could not buy a silk handkerchief.

When I looked into the question of the selling of Assam silk and other articles it seemed that there was very little produced that would command a ready market in competition with other silks—and so it was that Mrs. Maitland King and I decided that for the time being she should start the little Assam-Bengal Industries Sales Room in the Club and in the meanwhile we would try to help by suggesting designs and weaves to the local Khasi Weaving Society and the Gauhati Emporium. I would like here to say a very hearty "thank you" to Mr. Mehta as Director of Industries, to Rai Sahib Sundaram in charge of the Gauhati Emporium and to Mr. Dhar of the Khasi Weaving Society for their enthusiastic reception of our ideas and for the great help we have had from them from the beginning. We are also greatly indebted to the Club Committee for allowing us the use of the sales room rent-free and for other concessions. The Bengal Home Industries is an Association owning capital which enables them to buy their stock from the villagers, but here the difficulties in the way of raising the necessary capital are so great—people have not much money to spare and demands on their generosity are many—that it seems that it would be best to start like the "Good Companions" in Calcutta on a consignment basis which requires only sufficient income to defray establishment expenses. The Good Companions opened their sales depot for Industrial Missions and Industries on January 22nd, 1934, with a present of Rs.100 from Lady Willingdon, the promise of

Rs.100 each on loan from six sympathisers, the offer of the Bible Society's room as a sales room, and a very great deal of faith ! By the end of three months they had grown out of the sales room and took half the ground floor of No.22, Chowinghee, and within a few months they were growing out of that. The lean months of June, July, August and September were a drain upon their resources and another Rs.100 had to be borrowed but in October the sales went up and from then on they never looked back. It is from such modest beginnings that the present Good Companions Depot in Calcutta has grown and its success is largely due to the amazing way in which those who work and send their goods for sale have improved in design and workmanship, with the advice and help given by those ladies working in the Sales Room.

Most of you, if not all, have seen the remarkable way in which Mrs. Maitland King's little Assam Bengal Sales Room has grown from similar modest beginnings. Many of you have worked there to help Mrs. Maitland King and I know that everyone here will join with me in congratulating her very heartily on the wonderful success of her efforts. It is entirely because of these efforts that we are now in a position to make a start with the proposed Assam Industries Association which I am asking you now to consider.

We will hear from the Hon'ble Minister for Industries, the Director of Industries, Mrs. Maitland King and Mr. Blank their views on the question and we shall be very grateful if you will all consider the proposition and then, I hope, give us your support. I have been tremendously struck with the enthusiasm you have all shown and I am very sure that with the support and help of all of you we shall be able to make such an Association one—of which not only we but Assam may be proud.

25. Opening of the War Stall at the Assam Industries Association (1st May, 1941).

The Opening of this War Stall adds yet another to the list of Assam's War efforts. For some time Mrs. Small had been quietly selling gifts of Naga cloths for the benefit of the War Funds. Then an account of Thrift Shops opened in another Province inspired us to develop this idea and to enlarge its scope so that all gifts might be sold here.

You will of course realise that the sales will depend entirely on the generosity of donors. If gifts fail there will be nothing for sale, but we feel sure that we shall not appeal in vain and that these shelves will never suffer the reproach of nakedness. We are convinced that all who have gardens in Shillong will keep these Flower Vases stocked with flowers for sale and I have no doubt the visitors in Shillong will come here and buy flowers to cheer them in their enforced absence from their own homes and gardens.

We have all listened with ever-growing anxiety to the Wireless news during this last fortnight. Our confidence in ultimate victory, which remains unshaken, does not prevent our acute distress over the hardships and sufferings borne by our gallant troops who have been so heroically helping to defend Greece in her mortal extremity. You must have all longed, as I did, to be somewhere nearer the scene of action, somewhere where we could feel we were really and truly pulling our weight. The fact remains that we are here in complete security, living under extremely adequate if not luxurious conditions, while those near and dear to so many of us in England are daily subject to the violence of War and have to be content with rations, which if adequate, are certainly not luxurious. Our pent-up longings to help those at home will do no good to anyone unless we can utilise them as an incentive to yet greater efforts in aid of War Funds. By this I do not mean that we

should substitute efforts in aid of the War for those we are already committed to for the benefit of the Province. That would indeed be wrong and most unfair to Assam.

There are few of us who can honestly say we have no time for more. Mrs. Small has found no lack of helpers and I am sure that many all over the Province will look around their homes and see what they can send as gifts for sale here. If by any chance elephants other than white ones should be sent will donors please make provision for them as there will be no running expenses in connection with this Stall.

We have to thank the Assam Industries Association for allowing us the use of their grounds and of this Shelter. I am reminded of the story of Spider and the Fly. "Will you come into my Parlour", said the Spider to the Fly, "It's the very nicest Parlour that ever you did spy". I am not quite clear in my own mind whether the Spider is represented by the Assam Industries Association or by this War Stall, but whichever it is I am quite sure that you all represent the Fly ! I only hope that you will not be devoured wholesale so that something of you is left to come again !

Our warmest thanks are due to Mr. Waheed Ali who has made us this beautiful War Stall out of the somewhat decrepit Shelter he was given to work on. The renovations are his contribution to the War Stall and I know you will agree with me that it is a most generous gift. It enables us to start the War Stall with no debts. We asked him to make it conspicuous and I know you will agree that he has succeeded brilliantly. If passers-by do not come in to see what it is all about the fault is not ours !

Now with your help we will give Mrs. Small and all her helpers a grand push off. We may not be able to "Roll out the barrel" but we can and will roll in the gifts and the money—so let us "Go to it".

IV. RIGHTS OF WOMEN (WAY TO FREEDOM)

26. Anath Ashram and the Women's Protection Society, Shillong, (3rd May 1941.)

I thank you for your address of Welcome and for the kind words of appreciation in that address.

I am very glad to have been able to come here to-day to visit the Anath Ashram of the Hindu Mission and the Women Protection's Society with which it is associated. Most of all am I glad to come because I feel it is time indeed that your efforts to alleviate the unhappy lot of the orphans and of those who have stumbled on life's way should meet with more encouragement from the public and with the support of every well-wisher of the Province.

The thought of Salvage is in all our minds these days. It has been a revelation to every one to realise how much of what was formerly thrown away as useless has now become a valuable addition to the country's resources. It is even more so with Human Salvage. Unwanted babies may grow up to be the most useful citizens, even more useful because of their gratitude to the country which has given them a place in the world which they can fill with self-respect.

I believe that this feeling of self-respect is one of the most important, if not *the* most important, of all things to be encouraged. Charity is sometimes hard to bear. What we can do and what we all ought to do is to put it within the reach of every one, not only to provide themselves with the necessaries of life, but to be able to add something to the sum total of the world's achievement. Every child in this orphanage should grow up with the conviction that there is work worth doing for him or her in this world and that he or she will be trained for it. Every woman in the Society's Hostel should be able to feel that she can put the past, however wretched, behind her and make of the life before her something really well worth while.

I know that your Secretaries of both the Orphanage and the Women's Protection Society have these ideals in their hearts. It is for all of us to help them to carry out their purposes.

As regards the Hindu Orphanage, is it really too much to ask Government who are, after all, responsible for the health and welfare of all the eleven million inhabitants of this Province to assist in this most creditable work? Is it not unutterable wastage of the potential resources of the Province if they do not do so? A nation's wealth lies in its children. More especially when there are no parents to look after the children should the State step in and lend a hand.

I am reluctant to appear to criticise your splendid effort but I would like to draw the attention of the public to the fact that the resources with which you are trying to carry out your work are utterly inadequate and that therefore your children can hardly fail to suffer from the effects of malnutrition. I do plead for more general public support that these children may have sufficient to enable them to grow to their full potential stature, both physically and mentally.

To turn to your Women's Protection Society. From your Report I think you have achieved much in the short time it has been in existence. This is entirely due to the devoted labours of your Secretary. Will he and all of you forgive me if I say that above all this is Women's work? Where are the Women of Assam to take up this Work? We have great examples before our eyes from our sister Province of Bengal. Lady Abala Bose stands out. She has, I suppose, done more than any woman in her time, saving perhaps Mrs. Saroj Nalini Dutt for the cause of Hindu widows. I could mention many others in Bengal but I happen to have had personal knowledge of the great work done by Mrs. S. K. Sinha in the All-India Women's Industrial Home, in Dum Dum, and by Lady Bose in the Bengal Women's Co-Operative Industrial Home also in Dum Dum.

These show the way to us in Assam. You have already started in the right way by your Weaving efforts but what you need is a strong Committee of women who will direct and guide these efforts so that they may find a ready market. I know what this means in work and effort. You do not want non-workers on such a Committee. I have seen the results which can be obtained but I know too the sheer hard work which brought about these successful results. My best wish for you is that you too may find some ladies here in Shillong who will give of their time and of their ability to help you on to a sure basis of production. The market is here, the demand for hand woven goods far exceeds the supply. If a high standard of work is insisted upon and advice as to design is taken from those who know the market I can assure you that you will get all the work you need.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate you on the persevering efforts which have resulted in so much progress made in these two institutions and I wish them both a much brighter future.

27. All-India Women's Conference, Assam Constituency (1939)

We have been through a fairly long and detailed programme in which we, as members of the Assam Constituency of the All-India Women's Conference, have endorsed these Resolutions passed at the Annual General meeting of the Central Association. The ground covered has been extensive, and if some of us are inclined to be apprehensive at the scope and nature of some of these Resolutions and to wonder how we in our little far-a-way corner of Assam can hope to carry out such an ambitious programme, let us remember that everything has to have a beginning and every step forward helps us along the road to better conditions for the women and children of the Province. We must keep our eyes lifted towards the stars and our feet firmly on the road of achievement.

It has often been said to me, with what justification I leave to your judgment, that the women are to a large measure responsible for the continuance of the cleavage that exists between communities in India. If this be a fact, and I again emphasise that I am not in a position to judge, it is indeed wise that Communal Unity should be in the forefront of the Resolutions on our list today. It behoves us all to help by every means in our power to break down the barriers that exist.

The world is in the throes of War and everywhere it is the women who suffer most. In the wars of bygone days women and children were protected physically as much as possible, but in a totalitarian war such as is being waged today none may hope to escape and the weakest and most defenceless are the obvious prey, and the soonest to be attacked by Dictators who fear no God and to whom the principles of justice and mercy are matters for scorn and derision. We must do our utmost to hold aloft the lamp of mercy, of compassion and of kindness so that when these dark days are over, those who have walked through the valley of the shadow of death may find hope and courage to build a new and better world.

There is much for us to do here in Assam. We must not be content to say that Assam is a backward Province. It would not long be backward if the women all combined. I have heard public-spirited men in India bewail the fact that India is so backward in her social services as compared with England. But I would ask you to study carefully how that degree of Social Service was built up and then to ask ourselves whether it is Government who alone can be blamed or whether it is not we ourselves, the mothers who share the blame. I will quote to you some passages from Sir George Newman's Building of a Nation's Health. In taking of the establishment of Infant Care Centres he writes:—

" Thus for the first time guidance for English mothers in infant care and care nourishment became obtainable between 1900 and 1906. Infant milk depôts, infant consultations, schools for mothers and infant nurture centres were started in various parts of the country, and by 1910 were exerting a powerful influence throughout the population. Concurrently the medical supervision of school children had in 1908 become an important factor in the life of the English home and the mothers were awakening to the needs of their children's health Several million mothers became " child conscious ". It was this almost universal MATERNAL AWAKENING which really began to change the outlook of child health—as every alert medical officer of Health knew in his own district between 1904 and 1910 ". One of the greatest achievements of these times was the Children's Care Committees. " The Act for the Provision of School meals authorised the Education Authority to " associate " with itself a School Canteen Committee. This was to prove the beginning of what became known in 1909 as " Care Committees ". It would not be easy to estimate the invaluable service rendered by these bodies, both at the initiation of school feeding and medical inspection of school children during the thirty years of their growth. For they brought into these new administrative movements a voluntary spirit of initiativeness and invention, unstinted care and time, and that altruistic devotion by which great things are done ". " It was a new type of social service which reaped an early and continuing harvest ". " The Educationists in England knew, as the parents knew, that many hungry children were sitting in school and that it was useless to attempt to educate an un-nourished child ". " Education of the under-fed is a positive evil ". " To educate under-fed children, it was said, is to promote deterioration of physique by exhausting the nervous system ".

We can, and should, demand legislation for the protection of women and children; Maternity Benefit Schemes all have their part to play but I ask you,

have we in India any such comparable voluntary social services as those which built up the great structure of social service in England? Do the women of India come forward in their thousands, do they even come forward in their tens, to lay upon themselves the burden of voluntary services in the absence of such State-run services? Believe me my sisters, it is no excuse to say that we have no money. The will to sustained work is the one and only essential and other things are drawn to it as iron filings are drawn into the sphere of the magnet.

I have spoken at length on this subject of Care Committees because I feel that this is one way in which this constituency could do real nation—building work.

I will merely touch on the Resolution to promote indigenous industries. Here in Assam we have a wonderful heritage from the past. The skill of the weavers is not yet dead but alas! We see all too often that, lured by the relative cheapness of Japanese and Chinese yarn, they neglect their own beautiful Assamese silk and put money into the hands of foreigners in these countries instead of demanding the silk yarn from their own people. Again the customer is tempted by the lower price of the silk material and never realises that he is taking the bread from his brother's mouth to put into the mouths of the Chinese or Japanese.

The same tale of neglect can be told of designs. There are the most beautiful Assamese designs which have been handed down in the traditional way for, perhaps, hundreds of years.

Knowing my interest in these matters generous ladies have sent me precious heirlooms, but when I tried to get them copied by the weavers of today I was told they are uneconomic, they would take too long, they would be too expensive to buy. I believe most earnestly that if the women of Assam demand Assamese silk and Assamese designs in their own Saries, there would be such an impetus given in this direction that the weavers and silk producers would be able to enjoy the prosperity which their indigenous art deserves.

I must apologise for taking up so much time but I hope to speak through you to all the women of Assam.

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28. Assam Branch of the All-India Women's Conference Echo and Half-yearly Meeting (June 21st, 1941).

We have assembled here today for the Combined Echo and half yearly Meeting. We have adopted those of the Resolutions passed at the last All-India Women's Conference which we think most applicable to Assam. Nearly all of these are connected with the betterment of conditions for Women and Children with one exception — that of the Resolution on War.

We especially, the women of the world, are all united in our detestation of War and in our longing for Peace. There may be differences of opinion as to whether wars are avoidable or unavoidable. Nothing you or I can do will sway the course of events in any way except one thing only. We can all unite in Praying for Peace.

Social Service work in India is in its infancy, in Assam we are among the most backward but the fact that this Assam Branch of the All-India Women's Conference has gone steadily forward in these last 4 years is proof that interest in such matters is being steadily awakened. I know that many here are wishful to do more than the little they have yet been able to accomplish. Without financial resources it is difficult to keep up any sustained work. Much is being learnt through trial and error. We must see that we are not disheartened too much but be ever ready to try again and again. It is inevitable that in a time of stress and strain such as we are enduring the social services should suffer. Many of your Members are working hard for the comfort of their fellow-countrymen serving abroad and in providing Hospital

supplies for the sick and wounded of the Forces. Such Members are forming habits of work for others which will, I know, never leave them.

The war cannot last for ever. We may still cry aloud "Watchman ! What of the Night ?" and the answer still comes "The night is dark and full of storm", but no night but ends in the dawn of a new day. When that day dawns we must be ready, for it is the Women of every Country whose task it will be to bind up the wounds, to bring hope and comfort to weary and disillusioned men.

What of the Dawn ? None can tell the form or substance of the new Day, but whatever it is Women's work will never change. Let us resolve that the love which we shower upon our children may reach out in ever widening circles so that eyes may see the sadness of the needy and destitute around us, that our hearts may feel the load of sorrow too heavy to be borne and that having seen and known we may be impelled to work for those in need in that spirit of Divine Compassion which makes the whole world kin.

29. Presidential Speech for the Annual General Meeting of the Assam Constituency of the All-India Women's Conference (1st November), 1941

It is now 4½ years since you did me the honour of making me your President. We have now come very near to the parting of the ways. There was a time when it seemed to me as if the parent organisation was becoming the willing tool of party politics and I considered very carefully whether the time had not come for me to resign from the activities of the All-India Women's Conference. This would have been a great disappointment to me because I have always held that our work for women and children, for the alleviation

of their sufferings and the betterment of their lot should not be hampered in any way by differences of opinion or by the fierce antagonism of polities. In this you have most loyally supported me and by your Secretary's careful choosing of such Resolutions as were of universal application and could be in no way contentious and by your support of such Resolutions you have made it possible for me, to my great happiness, to continue with you to the end of our road together. I thank you with all my heart for this spirit of co-operation which has enabled us to work together throughout this time.

You do not need me to tell you of my love for India and for the people of India, above all for the simple folk. If I have been able to help them in any way I ask for no better memorial than the recognition that I have done what I could.

So much for our relations with each other which have always been most happy. But what of our achievements ? Have we justified ourselves ? Have we lived up to our protestations of our high ideals of service ? Can we claim that anyone in the Province is the better for our efforts, for our numerous meetings, our framing and passing of Resolutions ? Is everything only on paper as are so many of the grandiose schemes of present days ? I do not presume to judge. It may be that time is needed for the laying of solid foundations, that women have to learn the procedure of Committees and of the methods of working through Committees. Social Service by the well-to-do women of India is comparatively an innovation. Custom and tradition are factors which militate against such service. Adherence to caste and the prejudices of caste have built up a high wall of seclusion around the women of the well-to-do. It takes much courage to scale those walls. It will take many generations to make those walls of such intangible substance that though they remain in spirit yet they become as thin as air to permit of the ministrations of those more favoured by fate to their less fortunate sisters.

It is perhaps too easy for European women to judge their Indian Sisters. We have no caste. Our Master has taught us if it as He who was Divine could wash the feet of His Disciples, so all service to the lowly was thereby ennobled. For nearly 2,000 years we have had this Precept before us and yet can we say that we follow His Example in all things ?

The times are changing in India and changing fast. But one thing will not change. Just as the influence of the women behind the veil of Purdah has been the most potent force in India so will it ever be. It is for the women of India to see that they are educated, intellectual, well-informed, trained to judge wisely and temperately so that their influence may lead their beloved country safely through the storm and stress of present-day conditions to the haven where we would all be.

So I feel that it is not only by specific achievements that we should weigh up the 4 years that this Assam Constituency has been working. The framework has been well built, the Women of Assam have been learning how to work such a constitution, they have become an established part of the whole, which is the All-India Women's Conference. It is a splendid conception to have all the women of India united into one body and it is only by the inclusion of all who are of moderate opinions that the drive and energy of the more advanced elements will be tempered and moulded into a great force for good in the ultimate progress of India.

And so as the time draws near for me to give up the reins of Office as your President I bid you look forward ; though little may appear to have been accomplished it is something indeed to your credit that Assam is represented in this All-India Women's Conference and has a voice, however small, in its deliberations. Do not think you can be content to remain as you are, it is a feat which has never yet been accom-

plished. The Law of Nature is such that there must always be movement, either forward or backward. See to it that the edifice you are building is finished, with a roof upon it and made fit for habitation inside, so that it does not become one more of the many monuments to human beings' lack of achievement.

I thank you all for your loyalty and co-operation throughout these years and my very best wishes go with you always.

V. FIGHT FOR FREEDOM (WAY TO PEACE WITH VICTORY)

30. Opening Ceremony of the Pleasure Park Fun Fair. (7th April, 1941,

Always I have longed for the opportunity to tell you how dear to the hearts of His Excellency and myself are the people of the Khasi Hills. Now the opportunity is here but I would that I could speak to you in your own language. For the best part of 4 years we have moved amongst you in your own loved hills free and friendly as yourselves. Your hills have given us courage in difficult times, your little valleys and mountain streams have brought peace into our hearts when all the world was full of strife. We owe you a debt which we can never repay, but our thoughts will ever turn to you in affectionate memory long after the time has come for us to leave you.

You can therefore realise how glad I was to consent when your Siem asked me to open this Fun Fair to be held in aid of the War. You do not need me to speak to you of the War and the Principles for which we had to go to War. The fact that you are making this big effort is proof enough that you realise how all who love Freedom must range themselves on the side of the Great Democracies. I hope that this enterprise will not only bring financial support to Assam's War effort but that it may give you many hours of enjoyment in this Pleasure Park.

I feel it is indeed a fitting way of inaugurating this People's Park. First, we had the All-Assam Boy Scouts' Jamboree with their ideals of Service, Comradeship and jollity and now we have your Fun Fair with its object to raise funds for the great Fight for Freedom and its method of doing so through fun and laughter. I am sure you will agree with me that this Pleasure Park could not be more fitly started on its future objective, that of providing a safe and pleasant place of recreation for the ladies and children of Shillong.

Siem of Mylliem, to you, to your Myntris, to your Committee and to all your subjects, I give His Excellency's thanks for this big and loyal effort which you are making here to-day and I have great pleasure in declaring this Fun Fair Open.

Kubelei Baraw, Kubelei Shibun.

31. Inaugural Meeting of the Women's Voluntary Service (18th August, 1941)

I think there can be few amongst you who have not heard of the Women's Voluntary Service which plays such a large part in the Civil Defence Services in Great Britain. It has established for itself a reputation which will endure for all time.

I have realised for some time the widespread desire which everyone has to share in Assam's War effort. It was this realisation most of all which urged me to bring the Women's Voluntary Service for Assam into existence. Every one, no matter who she may be, has an equal right to share in the Province's War effort, and she is entitled to every amenity and guidance which those in authority are able to provide towards these War efforts. Everyone has an equal right to regard the Work Party at the Shillong Club as their Parent Depôt. I know that all those who are respon-

sible for the organisation of the Work Party are anxious that this should be widely recognised. The wool and materials purchased by the Members of that Work Party are made from the funds placed at their disposal by the Assam War Fund and this money has been subscribed from all over the Province by people of every class and colour and creed. The directions and instructions are issued from the Central War Organisation and are for the benefit of everyone who wishes to work for the War Organisation of the Indian Red Cross and Amenities for Troops.

In this war effort we want everyone's help, and everyone's work is equally valuable. One of the functions of the Women's Voluntary Service will be to form subsidiary Work Parties, the representatives of which will be able to procure all the materials and instructions they require from the Work Party at the Shillong Club.

But work for the troops is only one of the war efforts which I am going to ask you to initiate. I want you to start Ladies' Savings Groups for the encouragement of investment in Defence Certificates. This will be organised by the Women's Voluntary Service through funds provided by the Assam War Fund. Each Group will have to have a most reliable Group Officer in charge of it. These Group Officers will have to acquaint themselves with the terms of the Defence Savings Certificates and be able to stress the advantages to the investor as well as the help it affords in the prosecution of the War. They will also be responsible for the stamps held for sale and the cash received. It will be for you all to decide how you can best approach people to persuade them to invest in these Defence Savings Certificates. I think that there are many people who would like to do so but are deterred by their ignorance of how to proceed and the delays which would be incurred by visits to the Post Office. In this connection Mrs. Kent has very kindly come here this evening in order to tell us how the Ladies'

Savings Groups are run in Calcutta. Even if conditions of life here in Shillong need different ways of procedure it cannot but be of the greatest help to us to hear how this very successful scheme has been organised in Calcutta.

We look to the Women's Voluntary Service to assist in providing volunteers for the A. R. P. Services. I know that many, Khasi ladies in particular, have already volunteered but I think there are many who have not yet been approached and who would be ready to volunteer. It will be for the Women's Voluntary Service Representatives to explain how they can best help those who wish to volunteer and to pass on their names to the A. R. P. authorities. It will be realised that a knowledge of First Aid and Home Nursing is one of the first requisites and the members of the Women's Voluntary Service should collect the names of those wishing to join in such courses and the Committee will then ask for arrangements to be made for them. All forms of salvage come within the scope of the Women's Voluntary Service and it will be one of the Committee's duties to arrange for the sales of these. A regular collection of Literature for the Troops is one important function which has been suggested for the Women's Voluntary Service by the Red Cross Commissioner in Delhi. This is badly wanted both in English and the Vernacular and it is a *constant* supply of Books and Papers which is wanted, as we are told in many places the troops are "starving for literature".

There was a time not long past when Stenographers were badly needed and I am sure that many would have volunteered had they known of the urgent need. A Register will be kept of the names of all volunteers and of their qualifications so that whenever the need arises the demand may be met.

You will see from the leaflets there are many other activities which will fall within the scope of the Women's Voluntary Service, but I want to speak to you about another which is not mentioned there. It

has come to my knowledge that amongst Air Raid Casualties there is a very high percentage of those requiring blood transfusion, in fact the percentage is 1 to 10. You will have read of the existence in England of Blood Banks where powdered blood is kept stored indefinitely ready for immediate use. That, unfortunately, is not possible here in India, although partially dried blood can be kept for some months, but we can be prepared to the extent of blood grouping and of having a list of approved volunteers ready against an emergency. The blood from donors requires to be specially tested as well as grouped. This Blood Donor Service is one which is very much needed in Shillong even in these days when War is still, we hope, far off. Should Air Raids happen in Shillong it will be of vital assistance. So I make an urgent appeal for volunteers, and I am not asking anyone to do what I am not prepared to do myself. I have already submitted to the test and been grouped. What I do want to ask you is not to volunteer unless you are prepared to go through with it and give a pint or so of your blood. It was constantly told us in England that many people would be all the better for giving up a little blood and we all know of the value the Doctors put on blood letting in former days ! So I can assure you that you have nothing to fear in this connection. The procedure in England in connection with the giving of blood to a Blood Bank was that you walked into the building, the blood was removed, you lay down for half an hour and were given a cup of tea after which you went on with the day's routine. In Shillong I believe 4 days' holiday can be claimed, so if anyone is thinking they would like a holiday here is a very good way to achieve it ! The Pasteur Institute is a long way away and so Dr. Brown has very kindly arranged for the necessary blood for testing to be taken from any volunteers who go to the Lady Kerr Welfare Centre on Mondays or Wednesdays at 11.00 o'clock. They only need to say that they wish to be enrolled in the Women's Voluntary Service Blood Transfusion Service.

It is hoped to have a Women's Voluntary Service representative in every District Work Party throughout Assam. The Women's Voluntary Service does not overlap or usurp the functions of any other organisation. Its sole aim is "Service to all". Where other organisations are already arranging Balls, Concerts or Entertainments in aid of War Funds the Women's Volunteer Service helps where and how it can. Please remember we have one right and one privilege only and that is to be allowed to help where help is needed.

So much for the present time of non-active participation in War. The time may come and it may not be far off when we shall find ourselves called upon to endure something of what has been so heroically borne by the gallant people in Blitzed Towns. Then we may be called upon to run Rest Shelters and Evacuation Camps,—who knows? To quote one example only, Miss Booth told me that in a village not very far from Liverpool it was decided to start an Evacuees Camp for 300 against a day of necessity and the scoffers said never would refugees come out so far from the town. When Liverpool became the Victim of one night of horror that Camp had to shelter 2,000 evacuees—to feed them and probably clothe them.

I hope that I have been able to give you a brief outline of the aims and objects of the Women's Volunteer Service and that you will agree they provide a convincing answer as to why the Women's Voluntary Service has been started here in Assam.

We have Registration Forms here to-day and I hope all who are interested will take one and enrol themselves in the Women's Voluntary Service. There is no Registration Fee. It is hoped Badges will be available soon at a small cost but our one rule is that Badges must be earned by not less than a Month's Service.

I feel confident that the response to this Appeal for enrolment will fully justify the step we have taken and that this Women's Voluntary Service may be the means of drawing everyone who wishes to help in the war effort into one sisterhood of service.

**32. Meeting of Women's Voluntary Service
Wardens at the Assam Club (January 10th,
1942.)**

Wardens of the Assam Women's Voluntary Service !

I speak to you to-day not for the first time, but perhaps for the first time when it must be obvious to one and all that this work which you have undertaken is of great importance in view of the ever more menacing threat of war drawing nearer to Assam.

To be prepared is not the act of one who is fearful or who can be rightly called an alarmist. We all know the fate of not only citizens of towns, but of whole nations who have, like the ostrich, deliberately not seen the danger that is approaching. It is true the danger may never come upon us but we should be criminally negligible if because of that possibility we took no measures to guard the safety of the people.

Neither I nor anyone else can tell you whether Air Raids will come to Shillong, but so long as such a possibility exists, the responsibility is on every one of us to help in every way we can. As His Excellency the Governor observed at Tinsukia, "Air Raid Precautions is the business of each one of us," and it is the Air Raid Precautions Officer for Assam who has asked the Women's Voluntary Service to undertake these special duties in connection with women and children.

You who have come forward in response to our appeal have set a very splendid example. Mrs. Small, the Chief Women's Voluntary Service Warden for Shillong, who should have been with us today but who has been called away on account of illness, has been a most inspiring leader. Her enthusiasm, her drive and energy have put real life into this effort and you do well to

follow her leadership so loyally. Mrs. Rahman is very ably carrying on her work for her and I know very well that she commands not only the affection but also the trust of the women of this Town to a very remarkable degree.

Although you have these two excellent leaders, I want you all to feel that this is a time when every one of you will find full scope for all the initiative which you can shew. For this reason you will find that certain broad lines of policy are laid down but the methods by which you will carry out this policy are left to you as individuals to organise.

The maintenance of morale among women is the official title of your work and that includes the work you are doing now in preparing for Air Raids and the work which will be required of you during Air Raids.

For the benefit of the new Women's Voluntary Service Wardens, I will sketch briefly what has already been accomplished. A chain of Women's Voluntary Service Wardens have been appointed throughout the length and breadth of Shillong. There are already 43 of these, and I hope the number will increase. The general duties of these Wardens are to give women, and especially mothers of families advice as to how to protect themselves against casualties caused by flying glass by pasting old *sari* cloth on their windows ; by emphasising the safety given by slit trenches ; by emphasising the danger of being on the streets during an Air Raid ; and by getting people familiarised with the Women's Voluntary Service sash or armlet so that they may know to whom to turn for comfort and help in the hour of danger. All Women's Voluntary Service Wardens will welcome people to their own shelters, trenches or protected rooms in their own houses, they will keep First Aid Box ready and give all the help in their power. Each post will have an Air Raid Precaution men's Voluntary Service notice at the gate or entrance.

There are 3 subsidiary First Aid Posts among the Wardens and a trained Nurse will be in charge of each. Tea and light refreshments will be provided if necessary and warm coverings for those injured or frightened.

A Mobile Canteen, very kindly lent by Mrs. Small and manned by Women's Voluntary Service personnel will be held in readiness to go to any place of emergency. This Canteen will have a First Aid Party attached to it.

In the meanwhile this Mobile Canteen is giving very valuable assistance in Propaganda work. It has been taken by Mrs. Small and her staff to almost every area of Shillong and open air meetings have been held around it at which the crowds have been addressed in the Vernacular by Mrs. Rahman, Miss Swer and others. Many questions have been asked by women in the crowds and much re-assurance has been given.

Meetings have been arranged in Schools and I am glad to say that the Headmistresses of some of the Girls' Schools were among our first Women's Voluntary Service Wardens. It is hoped that the Headmistresses of all the Girls Schools will join this Warden Service so that they may help in giving instruction to the children.

I would like to speak one word of reassurance in connection with the children. Very unexpectedly it has been proved that children in London have suffered no nervous disorders or shock from the aerial bombardment. So we may have one fear removed, provided we keep the children safe by taking advantage of all the Air Raid Precaution Measures being provided for us we can look forward with fortitude to whatever may come.

I thank you all for this work of national importance which you are doing and I congratulate you most warmly on this proof of your sense of citizenship.

33. Women's War Work Party at Jowai (31st January, 1942.)

I must first of all thank you all very much for the welcome you have given me. It was a very great disappointment to me that I could not come to see you in 1939 when His Excellency first visited Jowai but I am very happy that His Excellency has made it possible for me to meet you all by coming to Jowai for a second visit.

I have tried to keep in touch with the work parties by means of the Monthly Circular Letters, which are sent round to each one. In them I try to describe something of what is being done throughout Assam and to tell you how very much your work is appreciated by those who have the handling of it and who are responsible for its distribution. Both the Red Cross Commissioners of the Middle East and of Malaya as well as the Chief Commissioner in India have asked me to assure you that your hospital supplies are getting to the Hospitals and that they are a tremendous help. The same may be said of the Woollen Comforts for the Troops. So you may rest assured that not only are your efforts appreciated but that they are a very definite contribution to India's war effort. If sometimes you feel weary of making innumerable bandages or Pyjamas or knitting successive scarves which seem endless in length, take fresh heart from this knowledge that you are by that much helping some sick or wounded soldier in Hospital or helping a fit man in the fighting zone to keep fit by the warmth which you have given to him. I know you will agree with me that it is the very least we can do for those who are giving all for us.

May I make just one plea to you all ? This war is being fought for all we hold most dear, Unity, Tolerance and Freedom. For these principles men are ready to give their lives. How should we fail to uphold these spiritual values ? Please do not think that I am asking all Work Parties to amalgamate into one, it is often more convenient to have several smaller ones, there is nothing in that, but until we can promote in ourselves

the same spirit of unity and help towards each other as is shewn by those who are suffering the hardships of war, we are not doing our utmost to help to bring about the brave new world we all look for when these terrible days are ended.

I think you may know that I was in England in the critical months after the fall of France when Britain stood alone and at bay as the last bulwark against the forces of aggression. An invasion seemed imminent and I saw the Blit'zkrieg in London at its height. In all those days I saw the most wonderful spirit shown by all, those who had lost their homes and all their possessions were taken care of by others more fortunate than themselves. There was no despair, no distinctions between rich and poor, everyone was a friend to those in need. It was a wonderful revelation and I have no doubt whatever that the same spirit would be shewn by all of you here in the face of adversity. That is the spirit which we must cultivate in all our dealings so that we too may help to bring about the peace for which we all long. We are in so large a measure the creatures of habit; it is thoughts which make us what we are, for thoughts inevitably lead to the spoken word and so to deeds. And so I ask you all, everyone of you, to cultivate within your hearts the spirit of peace, of love and help to all.

Once more I want to thank you for all you are doing and to ask you not to abate your efforts but rather to increase them for there is no doubt that we have a long and hard road before us to travel and nothing short of our utmost effort will avail to take us safely to that haven where we would all be.

34. China Day's Address in Shillong, (March 7th, 1942).

I speak to you especially, girls of the Shillong Schools, on this day which has been specially devoted to China. Perhaps few of us here know anything about China beyond the place it holds on the map of

the World and the fact that the Chinese are the best Carpenters and Shoemakers in our midst. Recently, however, we have all read or heard of the visit to India of Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, the very able and gracious wife of the Generalissimo. The utterances she made have scored a deep impression upon the minds of the women of India. Her words will be treasured for all time, and just as when a stone is dropped into the still waters of a pool the smooth surface is broken and the ever widening ripples stretch to the farthest edge of the waters so will her words have sunk into the hearts of her listeners and who can tell where the results will end.

Let us consider for a moment what it is that has made of this Chinese Lady such an arresting personality. She has been well-educated, so have countless others. She is burning with patriotism, the love of her own country, so are thousands, nay millions, of Indian women. Then what is it she has that is not shared by any others in India? I think Madame Chiang Kai-Shek has given us the answer in the motto she has chosen for China—"All for one and one for all".

By means of this lodestar she and those women who followed her lead have in the course of 20 years done more than anyone else to present to the world today a China united as one, suffering greatly it is true but with superb unflinching courage standing up year after year to the horrors of war, against vastly superior mechanisation with the one unshaken resolve to endure whatever has to be endured until victory is won.

Here is a great inspiration for the girls of to-day, for the women of to-morrow. Here is the true result of the education of women. Here is the compelling reason why India should attend to the upbringing of her girls above every other pressing need. Here above all is the reason why women should be treated with the respect and veneration that is alas ! often so sadly lacking in this great country.

I was once told of Amy Mollison, who you will remember went to London as a Typist on 25 shillings a week and earned for herself the name of the most famous airwoman of our time, that she had a mind like a silver spear. Never once did she swerve from her purpose which was to learn to fly and by dint of that singleness of purpose and that unshaken confidence she achieved her life's ambition.

Everyone of you here to-day could rise to great heights had you the requisite steadfastness of faith and purpose, but to become great you must think great, there must be no selfishness in your purpose, there must be no littleness in your thoughts, no hatred for others apart from a righteous burning indignation against wrongdoers and always there must be the deep humility which recognises the vastness of the ages, the greatness of God and the littleness of ourselves.

So to you I say, aim high, look wide, think deep and so may you in course of time be found worthy to take your place in future years among the women of India who will have made of their country what all the world is waiting for and longing to see, India united and therefore free.

35. St. Edmund's College, Shillong

I want to tell you how very pleased we are with the effort you have made to-day to help along the war in this way. You do not need me to tell you that this awful conflict could better be described as a Crusade against Evil. The powers of Evil are very strong and so we cannot expect an easy victory but that there will be victory of good over evil there can be no doubt, and you, each and everyone of you, by helping as you are able, can become a Crusader in this Fight. On behalf of His Excellency and myself I thank you all for this effort which you have made and which incidentally we have much enjoyed.

VI. SUPPLEMENTARY

I. Annual General Meeting of the Assam Industries Association (16th April, 1942)

You have the Third Annual Report of the Assam Industries Association in your hands. Besides the ordinary matter contained in a Report you will find there are 2 Appendices. The first one is Major McCall's Statement to the Bengal Industrial Survey Committee. Major and Mrs. McCall who are, as you know, the Joint Organisers of the Lushai Hills Cottage Industries, have built up a wonderful Industry adapted to the life and the needs of the hill people amongst whom they live. The whole fabric of the Industry is interwoven with the uplifting of the standard of life ; self-help is the keynote of the whole enterprise ; good work receives its just and fair reward, nothing but work that is well done is accepted but all good work is recompensed by the giving of a bonus, half of which is spent on village welfare. We commend this document to your notice as it describes the first example of a successful attempt in Assam to receive a Cottage Industry which was dying out and to adapt it to the life of the people and yet meet the exigencies of modern day trade conditions. The Joint Organisers have encountered many difficulties but they have surmounted them all and in building up this Cottage Industry on solid foundations have inspired confidence in the Hill People, the value of which cannot be overestimated in these days. It would be a tragedy indeed if these splendid efforts were allowed to fail when the personal financial backing provided by the Joint Organisers has to be removed. The Association will, we hope, come to the rescue, as recommended by the Working Committee, and take over this very solvent concern and cherish it as something which, we hope, may be an example to others in other parts of the Province, and a guide to them in what is unquestionably a very intricate problem.

The times are not propitious, a sense of caution may advise delay, but the Joint Organisers are not being caught napping, and already their efforts are being directed to war-time requirements in order to counteract any expected slump in the market for their ordinary goods. Before deciding our course it would be well to face the alternative, and that, should we not take over this concern, would inevitably be the gradual withdrawing of the Joint Organisers' Capital and the final extinction of a splendid example of how British rule and British endeavour has shewn the way to a whole people how to raise themselves and their sons and daughters out of the slough of poverty and despondency to a fuller and better standard of life.

As regards the 2nd Appendix, it is an example of how our Honorary Secretary and Treasurer have laboured in order to lighten the labours of those who run the Association, and to show them how to avoid mistakes which must inevitably result in clogging the wheels of the machinery. Besides this Appendix Mr. Hayley has drawn up a very comprehensive Rules of business Booklet. This is the first time the Business Rules have been put on paper and we all owe him a great debt of gratitude for the prodigious amount of work he has accomplished. We are confident that it will be the greatest help to all who come after us in keeping the administration on a business footing. Mr. Hayley is to give up his work as our Honorary Secretary and Treasurer because of the increasing demands upon his time. I know I shall be voicing all your thoughts when I express to him our warmest thanks for all that he has done for us.

When I addressed you at our last Annual General Meeting we were in an exceedingly perilous condition. As I said then, the Report made sorry reading but I cannot speak highly enough of the courage and tenacity with which the Working Committee shouldered the burden, threw themselves into the work of re-organisation

and by never-failing patience and industry raised the Association clear of all its embarrassments. Every debt was paid in full and thanks to the devoted labours of the Ladies we face the world today on sure ground confident in our ability to continue this work which we all feel is helping the poor people of this Province to raise themselves by the work of their hands to a better standard of living. The Association owes it warmest thanks to all who carried on undaunted in the face of a crippling burden. To Mr. Glass who shewed us the way back to solvency, drew up the new basis, upon which we were to work and who set us firmly on the road to a happier state of affairs, we can never express our thanks adequately. I think the fact that we have such a good Audit Note to place before you is sufficient proof of how excellently he devised the new system for us. The Association will never forget all it owes to him.

Once again we have to thank all those who have run the Tea Room for us, for the great part they have played in supplementing the finances of the Association. I am confident were this Tea Room ever to disappear there would be a gap in the life of Shillong which it would be found difficult to fill.

As regards the progress made in the Cottage Industries of the Province you can read the details for yourselves in the Report. The sad fate that befell the Sadiya Village Industries reflects no discredit on those who tried so hard to start them, the position was fraught with difficulties and the times were not propitious. The Naga Hills Industries have halted upon their way but I have no doubt that when happier times come the foundations which have been laid so far will help these Hills people in the same way as the Lushai Hills people have been helped.

The South Lushai Hills have sprung into the picture very much this year and it may well be that the policy adopted with them of taking what is produced

by the Lushais themselves and turning such products into articles of everyday use is one which would succeed well in the Naga Hills.

We are daily having the War brought closer to us here. This need not give rise to panic or consternation. I feel convinced that we should, as His Excellency has said, pursue our normal ways confident in the ability of our Forces to hold the enemy at bay. I realise with you that these are not days in which people spend money lightly and it behoves us to concentrate on such articles as will bring customers to our doors. Should shopkeepers flee in panic we can provide an antidote and do valuable work in helping to maintain the Morale of the people of Shillong. Even should evacuation come upon us, and it is as well to look the worst squarely in the face, it would be a comparatively simple matter to close down temporarily and resume business in happier times.

It is with the greatest regret that I leave you in such times but I am confident that you will successfully come through the present uncertain times by shewing the same dauntless courage, the same steadfastness and tenacity of purpose which has characterised your work during the last 12 months.

Assam has much for which to thank you all, we may not know the people whom we benefit but I have no doubt whatsoever that through your efforts and your unceasing toil many poor weavers have been helped to a sufficiency of the necessities of life at least and you will have saved much of the beautiful indigenous art of Assam for posterity. I know very well that you all consider this sufficient reward for all your labours and even if you do not receive the praise and thanks which is due to you from the Government the benefits to the humble workers are no less tangible and acceptable. I sincerely hope that your work may one day be suitably recognised.

2. Annual General Meeting of the Tuberculosis Association of Assam (14th April, 1942)

In presenting to you the 2nd Annual Report of the Tuberculosis Association of Assam I have to explain that the Honorary Secretary, Major Haythornthwaite has been called away on War Service and his work is being very ably carried on by Dr. Dey who has been the Honorary Assistant Secretary since the Association started and who has done the majority of the work for a long time. He deserves our gratitude. We must all regret the absence of Major Haythornthwaite who has built up for himself an outstanding position in these matters. I have spoken before of the debt that Assam owes to him and indeed to all the Members of the various Committees who have tried so hard to build up a really worthwhile scheme on the very slender resources of this Province.

Colonel Hesterlow handed over the Honorary Secretaryship to Major Haythornthwaite on the 5th August 1941. The Association has much to thank Colonel Hesterlow for the very comprehensive 1st Annual Report was drawn up by him and entailed a great deal of work. It was he who piloted the Association through the shoals of Registration and I know you will join me in a very hearty vote of thanks for all he did for this Association during the time he was in Shillong.

Colonel Shortt, Chairman, is also away on War Service but I know very well that you will always be able to rely upon his wise advice and you can look forward to his return when the very valuable work upon which he is engaged is completed. His work as Chairman of this Association will be carried on by Colonel Anderson, who has been associated with us since the beginning.

The accounts have been looked after by no less a person than the Comptroller himself. We feel we are in good hands and are grateful to Mr. Glass for the help he has given us at all times.

The Lady Reid Clinic is, I understand, nearly completed and I hope it may be not long before it is opened. I feel it is an honour to have my name associated with it.

The Sanatorium is to have its foundation stone laid today and of any Stones laid in faith and hope in spite of threatening clouds this must take pride of place.

Nothing but the dire and urgent need prevailing would justify this but I feel sure that you will uphold our action as the alternative would have been to deprive the Province of all hope of a Sanatorium for many years to come. It was the late Ministry who placed at our disposal the funds which together with our own resources made the construction of these two institutions possible and we should not forget to acknowledge with gratitude the service which they have thereby rendered to the province. We owe our thanks too to the Contractors who have undertaken to do this work for the Association in spite of all difficulties and of all rising costs. I hope that by the time this Building is completed the threat of war may have been pushed far back from the Frontiers of Assam, and the people of Assam may have restored to them the blessings of peace to enjoy the loveliness of their land.

We hoped to welcome delegates from the Districts at this Annual General Meeting. It may be that none are able to come in these times but we hope that the practice of delegates coming to present their Branches is one which will be adopted more and more throughout the succeeding years so that the Tuberculosis Association of Assam may be indeed a provincial Association. Free discussion will always be invited and suggestion from District Branches will be carefully considered. It is to be hoped that the expert advice and assistance which our trained workers will always be

ready to place at the disposal of the branches will be asked for and accepted so that money may not be wasted or spent unsuitably and that the sufferers from this disease may receive benefit to the utmost of this Association's resources. It is for this reason that we ask the District Branches to merge themselves in the Association and thereby reap more benefit than they could by remaining outside it.

For my own part the time has come for me to leave you. It is with deepest regret that I sever my connection with this Association. I had hope to see much more tangible evidence of all our labour, I had wished to leave the Sanatorium a completed building, but perhaps that is Life, one sows and another reaps. So long as the day of reaping comes it does not matter whose are the hands that help to sow. It will be for this Association to foster the work and bring it to completion. I know that I can safely leave that to you all and that in the years to come many sufferers will have cause to bless the work of your hands.

I cannot conclude without expressing our gratitude to all who work whether as Salaried Members of the Staff or as Voluntary Doctors. Dr. Deb, as you know, is due to return shortly after his training in Tuberculosis work and I am sure the Province will benefit from the expert knowledge he will have gained.

I feel you would like me to express our gratitude to our patron, His Excellency the Governor, for his constant readiness to help.

3. Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Shillong, (14th April, 1942).

As President of the Tuberculosis Association of Assam it is my privilege to welcome His Excellency as the patron of our Association, to be with us on this occasion of the laying of the Foundation Stone of our future Sanatorium.

Your Excellency knows more than anyone else how many difficulties there have been to surmount and it is especially welcome to us that you should be here today for without your help and constant advice we could not have succeeded in reaching this stage.

It is an especial satisfaction to me because many generous benefactors in Assam have from time to time entrusted me with their donations for this purpose. I should not have cared to leave Assam without seeing that the promises I made to them on behalf of the Association were within sight of fulfilment. I know that it seems to some that this is not the time to build with the enemy at our gates, also I realise that the difficulties are many, but the position of sufferers from this disease is even more desperate because of these conditions, the greater the delay the more desperate the conditions become and so I am glad indeed that the Association has not wavered from its purpose but in hope and confidence continues with its programme. May we not trust that God the Compassionate and all-Merciful will guard this sincere endeavour to help the sufferers from this dread disease?

It is a very real regret that our Honorary Secretary cannot be with us on this occasion. The whole of the Tuberculosis work in the Province has been guided and directed by Major Haythornthwaite over the last 5 years. Assam owes him a big debt of gratitude and on behalf of the Association I would like to express our admiration for all that he and the able staff under his direction have achieved. Dr. B. Dey has done a prodigious amount of work, and he is very adequately bearing the whole burden of the Honorary Secretary's work at this most difficult time. I commend him very warmly for his unfaltering determination to see this project through to a successful conclusion.

